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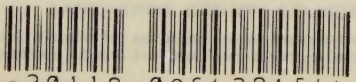
CLASS
G3

TITLE
Memorials of the mercies of a Covenant God.

No.
49068911



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MR. JOHN KERSHAW.

MEMORIALS

OF THE

Mercies of a Covenant God

WHILE

Travelling through the Wilderness.

BEING

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

JOHN KERSHAW,

OF ROCHDALE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST DAYS,

BY HIS WIDOW.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."—PSALM cvii. 43.

LONDON:
FARNCOMBE & SON, 30 IMPERIAL BUILDINGS,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

1905

Price 2/6; *by post*, 2/10.

4906891 1

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30 IMPERIAL BUILDINGS, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.;
AND AT CROYDON.

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PREFACE.

THE widow of my late deeply-lamented friend wishes me to say a few words by way of introduction to the following work. I have urged upon her, and I have done so in all sincerity of heart, that for *me*—whose actions are jealously, and in too many cases unscrupulously and with prejudiced eyes, watched at every turn; for *me*—not in the ministry nor ever likely to be; for *me*—professing no discernment in spiritual matters above others, beyond, perhaps, the simple interpretation of the Scriptures; for *me* to write a preface to such a volume as this would bear on its very front the stamp of presumption. But all has failed. She insists that, not only for myself, as amongst her late dear husband's oldest and truest friends, but also as the representative of my never-to-be-forgotten father (to whom, if one man were more firmly bound in love than another, that man was the late minister of Hope Chapel, Rochdale), and as the proprietor and publisher of the "Gospel Standard" (the periodical to which, of all others, Mr. Kershaw was, from its commencement, most warmly attached); she *insists*, I repeat, that I *must* say something.

But what *can* I say more than I said at the Jubilee Meeting in 1867? (See page 307.) In my remarks on that occasion, I referred to the fact that, many years ago, when I was in business as a printer, my late friend spoke of his Autobiography being upon his mind, and that he promised me (whom he then called his boy) I should have the printing of it when it was ready. I longed to see the work, as I was certain it would be an interesting one; but it was not forthcoming. I relinquished business as a printer in 1852; but that did not cause me to relinquish my desire to see the work, be the printer thereof who he might. On the contrary, I often spoke to my friend about it; but the only answer I could ever get was that it was not ready.

At last the Lord takes my friend away, and the work is left unfinished, the task of finishing it devolving upon the widow. She did finish it, and she finished it *well*. Still it needed revision. *Who* was to revise it—nearly 500 folio pages of manuscript? I was afraid of being asked, having my hands full and my head full, and my body weak. But I *was* asked; and though at the time I was under two

doctors at Malvern, on account of a distressing Oriental ailment, the result of my last journey to the East, and though I had refused others, I felt I could not refuse her.

So the MS.—a carpet-bag full—was left at my house. At first I looked at it with dismay, and was some days before I ventured even to turn it over. At last I decided upon taking it with me to Margate, where I was going with my dear wife, in the hope, with God's blessing, of deriving benefit. I put it carefully into my portmanteau, and at Margate devoted nearly five weeks to the work.

No; I will not call it a work, but a labour of love. In almost every page I could, as it were, see my dear friend before me and hear him speaking. Never was anything written more true to the life. Now I held my very breath to read the more carefully; now the tears rolled down my cheeks; now I smiled; and now I laughed outright; not a carnal laugh, be it observed, but a laugh of gratitude and real delight; just such a laugh as we read of in Ps. cxxvi. 2—to see how great the Lord's goodness had been to my friend, how he had delivered him out of all his temporal and spiritual troubles, and made him shout aloud for joy; and in the firm persuasion too, now and then, that though I had never experienced the same *depth* of trouble, either temporal or spiritual, or, perhaps, the same ecstasy of joy that he had, yet that I had had my measure of all meted out to me, and that I should meet him again with my dear father, where neither temporal nor spiritual trouble will ever be known, and join them in singing the praises of that blessed Redeemer, on whose preciousness they both in their ministry so delighted to dwell.

Before the sheets went to press, proofs were sent to me. As a rule, to read a book a second time it seems dry; but not so in this case; for every page before me in print seemed as fresh as it had been in the MS. And often did I exclaim, "O that my dear father had but left behind him his autobiography—an account of the dealings of the Lord with him in a connected form such as this! What an invaluable legacy it would have been to the churches!"

But as the printer tells me my remarks must be confined to two pages, I close.

May the blessing of the Lord attend this work! Nay, it *will* attend it; for, as my friend was wont to exclaim respecting sermons, &c., which he sometimes heard, "It contains the very marrow of the Gospel;" and I may add, the kernel of true Christian experience; and that *must* enrich the souls of God's people.

J. GADSBY.

39 FINCHLEY NEW ROAD, LONDON,
July 23rd, 1870.

EPISTLE TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

To the Church of Jesus Christ, scattered throughout the Land, but especially to that part of it which meets to worship a Triune Jehovah in Hope Chapel, Rochdale.

Grace be multiplied unto you, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was the intention of my beloved husband to dedicate these Memorials of the Mercies of a Covenant God to you, hoping they would be owned and blessed of him to your souls' comfort and edification while travelling through the wilderness to the haven of rest, prepared for all those who are called by grace, and cannot find any satisfaction or comfort but in and through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and earnestly desire the anointing of the Holy Ghost, to enable them to see and feel their interest in the same. This hope was greatly strengthened and increased in him through the assistance obtained by past events being brought vividly to his remembrance, and the dew and savour which rested upon his spirit while recording the same; so that what was originally commenced to gratify private friendship being, like the loaves and fishes of old, greatly multiplied, he felt it was intended for the edification of the church of God, and durst not hide it in the earth or put it under a bushel. He also felt that he had the word of God on his side, which is a "lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." (Ps. cxix. 105.)

Moses, in Num. xxxiii., wrote of the journeyings of the children of Israel from Egypt to the land of Canaan, and commanded also that the people should remember their forty years' travel in the wilderness: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart," &c. (Deut. viii. 2.) Asaph, also, in Ps. lxxviii., recapitulates the wonderful dealings of the

Lord with their forefathers, and assigns his reasons for so doing in the commencement of the psalm. Hezekiah also said, "The fathers to the children shall make known thy truth." (Isa. xxxviii. 19.) David also remembered the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar. He remembered also the lion and the bear, when he went to fight with the giant of Gath. (1 Sam. xvii. 36, 37.)

It was Paul's accustomed manner to open before his judges the way of his conversion. (Acts xxii., xxvi.) He would think of that day and that hour when grace laid hold of him and convicted him, and of his deliverance from the bondage of guilt, and would relate to them the means of it and his commission to preach the gospel to poor Gentile sinners; and I doubt not that the remembrance of these things comforted and refreshed his spirit. Many of you who have heard my dear husband preach will find things recorded in these Memorials which he used to relate to you with great joy and animation of soul, the remembrance of which used to make his face to shine, as showing forth the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord to him both in providence and grace.

It was his intention to have added many things to what is written, and I greatly lament that his numerous engagements to preach the word, his visits to the sick, and many other things which devolve upon an anxious pastor, with age and increasing infirmities, prevented him doing so. At the same time, I feel thankful that the principal events of his life, viz., his call by grace and his soul exercises relative to the work of the ministry, the formation of the cause at Hope Chapel, and the establishing and building up of the same, some account of his labours in different counties and his visits to the great metropolis of the land, and of his trials through poverty and the Lord appearing for him in the same, are by him faithfully recorded.

My husband was a plain man, and these things are recorded with plainness of speech; but I feel he is in good company in this matter also. Dear Paul, who was very learned, laid aside his excellence of speech when he declared unto the Corinthians the testimony of God. (1 Cor. ii. 1.) Also in 2 Cor. iii. 12 he says, "We use great plainness of speech." (See likewise 2 Cor. xi. 6.)

I have collected a few things relative to events connected with my dear husband and the people over which the Lord had placed him as an under-shepherd, and also recorded the closing scenes of his life and

dismissal to that land where his eyes behold the King in his beauty, and where he has joined that company of whom he used to say—

"Happy songsters!
When shall I your chorus join?"

That the dear Lord may own and bless these feeble endeavours to his own glory and the church's good, is the sincere desire and prayer of

His honoured Servant's bereaved Companion,

LYDIA KERSHAW.

Hope Chapel House, Rochdale,

July, 1870.

THE

Autobiography of Mr. Kershaw.

I was born at Lower Fold, Healey, in the parish of Rochdale, and county of Lancaster, on the 25th of August, 1792. My father, William Kershaw, was a native of Rochdale. When he was fourteen years of age, his father, Jonathan Kershaw, bound him apprentice to John Mathew, of Syke, shoemaker, of the same parish. He served his master truly and faithfully seven years, and lived with him another seven years after his apprenticeship. He then got married, and shortly after set up business at Lower Fold, where he resided until his death. The best of feeling always existed between him and his old master. They were mostly together on a Lord's day at chapel, and on Monday at the Rochdale market. If one was seen, the other was not far off, they being generally together on all convenient occasions. When John Mathew made his will, my father was appointed principal executor. I have often heard my father say, that if he ever knew two men that feared God and were true Christians, it was his master, John Mathew, and his master's father, old Richard, as he was called. With these two gracious men my father had been most intimately acquainted, both in things temporal and spiritual, and always spoke of them with veneration and respect.

My grandfather, Jonathan Kershaw, attended the old Presbyterian chapel in Blackwater Street, and my father went with him to this place of worship until the time he was bound an apprentice, when his master took him to Hall Fold Chapel, near Whitworth; at which place his master was a regular attendant for 56 years, and a member of the church a considerable part of the time. Seven of his last years he sat under my ministry at Hope Chapel, Rochdale.

But as I shall, in the course of my narrative, have to make frequent mention of my dear father, whom I greatly

loved as a parent and a man that feared God, I forbear to enlarge in this part of my memoir. Suffice to say he was twice married; he had three children,—one daughter and two sons by the first marriage, and two sons by the second, of whom I am the elder one.

It was in my father's heart to bring up his children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" but, alas! be it spoken to our shame, we rebelled against both his entreaties and commands. I am not, however, writing a memoir of the other branches of the family, therefore I will confine these remarks to my own case.

When I was a little boy, my father took me by the hand, and I went with him peacefully to the house of God; but as I grew up I began to feel a hatred to divine things. The chapel became like a prison to me; how wretched and miserable have I sat there, stopping my ears literally that I might not hear the sound of the minister's voice, and shuffling on my seat through weariness of the service; and as soon as the minister said "Amen" (which was the most welcome word to me in the whole service), out I ran as quickly as possible, and set off at full speed until I got home, having a mile and a half to go. When I reached home, I pulled off my chapel-going clothes and put on a second dress that I had to go errands in, and away I went like a wild thing just let loose, into the fields and adjoining woods to seek for my companions in sin. I was sometimes forbidden to go out on a Sunday evening, and compelled to stop within doors, and read the word of God. My father would also read aloud from some of his religious books, such as the works of John Newton and Hervey, and Erskine's Gospel Sonnets, which he was very fond of. As I sat and heard him read the latter, I often thought within myself that it was the most foolish of all books ever written. It contained, as I thought, nothing but a heap of contradictions, and what surprised me the most was, these very contradictions appeared the most pleasant and savoury to my father, such as his soul loved. Whilst I write, methinks I see his countenance pleased and delighted, as it was, with these good things. On such occasions I was like a vicious horse, champing the bit, prancing with its feet, longing to be gone; for my heart was with my sinful companions. Not a parent in the village kept his children under the

same religious discipline as my father did. Many let their children run riot in sin, untamed like the wild ass's colt in the wilderness. Often, whilst my father kept me in at the time others were suffered to go at large, although I loved and revered him as a father, yet because of his religious authority exerted as a means to restrain me from vice, I felt such enmity to his religion (I speak it with shame) that in my heart I cursed both him and his religion. My poor sinful soul longed so much to have its fling in sin that I could not bear the least restraint.

I was about fourteen years of age when my heart began to be more obstinate, my neck as an iron sinew, and my brow brass. (Isa. xlviii. 4.) I then determined that I would not go either to chapel or to the prayer-meetings as I had done, whilst my fellow companions were enjoying themselves. For this purpose I ofttimes arose early on a Sunday morning, and scampered away into the woods, unwashed and in my working clothes, keeping out of the way until I knew my father was gone to the chapel. Thus on such frolicsome occasions I had a whole day of it; but when night came on, the fear of going home seized me. How should I face the frowns of my father, and endure the chastisement I anticipated? The enmity of my heart was thus more and more exasperated against his authority. Other boys, my companions, could go home without fear; no questions were asked as to where they had been, or what they had been doing; no parents' frown to fear, nor rod in store for them. I knew that they were at ease, whilst my mind was racked at the thoughts of going home; and such was my blindness and ignorance, I felt as if I was hardly dealt with, and often flattered myself that the day would come when I should be twenty-one years of age, be my own master, free from such a galling yoke, and be at liberty to do as I pleased, without fear of parental restraint. Thus I was bent and determined to pursue my sinful course; and had it been left to me and my own free will as a fallen depraved sinner, and my sinful inclinations, the allurements of this vain world, the power of Satan by whom I was led captive at his will, I should have gone on in the broad and downward road to destruction, I should have died an enemy to God, his truth, his people, and his ways, and have sunk under the weight of my multiplied transgressions, and the wrath

of an angry God in his just and holy law, to the regions of the damned, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

I have often thought, and said, in the course of my ministry, that had the Lord left me to myself and the evils that dwell in my carnal heart, and my depraved nature, I should have ruined my constitution in the ways of sin, and my poor vile body would, ere this, have sunk to the grave, and my soul lifted up its eyes in hell. Sin, that accursed thing which a holy God hates, was deeply rooted in my very nature, springing up into bud and blossom; and an awfully corrupt crop would have been the result, had not the Lord laid fast hold of me when very young. I know the truth of what our Lord says dwells in and proceeds out of the human heart. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, all these things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark vii. 21, 22, 23.) I can truly say before the Lord that my soul loves the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians; for I was dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. I was one of these disobedient children, both to God and my parents, and I had my conversation in times past in the lusts of my flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and was by nature one of the children of wrath, even as others. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved me even when dead in sins," hath quickened my dead soul. This is sweet mercy, and precious love. It has often humbled my soul to think that the Lord should ever have thoughts of love and mercy towards such a vile, guilty rebel as myself; and as the effect of that love pluck me as a brand out of the fire, stop me in my sinful course, and bring me with a broken heart and godly sorrow for sin to Jesus's feet. Bless the Lord, even now whilst I write I feel a little of its sweetness in my soul, causing tears of gratitude to trickle down my cheeks. Well might the apostle John say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." And so sure as this love is felt in the heart of a poor

sinner, so sure will that soul love the Lord. As it is written: "We love him because he first loved us"; "his love is better than wine." I have long been begging the Lord to let me have another sweet taste of it, by shedding it abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. And, bless his dear name, he has granted my request. Of this I am fully assured, that the Lord never loved me because of any goodness that he saw in me, or was done by me, but because he would love me; as he said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." It is not in our power to enjoy the love of God in our souls but as he directs our hearts into it by his blessed Spirit. Yea, also, I know what it is to be in that dead, cold, helpless state of mind that I could not give myself the sweet feeling of personal interest in the love of Christ, nor shed one tear of gratitude to the Lord, if the salvation of my soul depended upon it. How true it is that all our springs of comfort and consolation are in the Lord! When he opens, none can shut; and when he shuts, none can open.

But to return to my narrative. In this deplorable condition the Lord did not leave me without checks of conscience and convictions of sin, as will appear from the following circumstances. On one occasion, I ran away, unknown to my parents, to some cock-fightings that were held in the neighbourhood. I joined the crowd of people outside the building, but did not see the cocks fight. I heard, however, too plainly the oaths and curses of those within. I would gladly have been inside, but could not find the money to see such cruel sports. The intervals between each battle were occupied by all sorts of carnal diversions, which pleased my sinful inclinations wonderfully. Thus I was one with them, not a jot or tittle better than the rest, considering my age and means. This happened during Whit-Week; at which time a double lecture was preached in the chapel my father attended. As I stood by the roadside amongst the ungodly crowd, two men, dressed in their Sabbath-day clothes, came past. I knew them well; they were friends of my father's. I had often heard them talk together on religious subjects, and I knew they were going to the chapel. The sight of these godly persons on that occasion was like a dagger to my soul. A secret something

spoke within me: "There go Richard and Abel! They are going to the chapel, and do not so much as turn their heads to look at such wicked proceedings. They are good men, going in the narrow way that leads to heaven. But as for me, I am in the broad and downward road that leads to hell." Oh what a beauty I saw in their demeanour, and the path which they had chosen! But what a wretch did I see and feel myself to be! I felt ashamed and confounded. I knew that my being there was unknown to my parents, and that it would grieve my father sadly had he been aware of my folly. I feared, too, that he might find out where I had been, and that I should have to pass under the rod for my transgression. But, more than all, I felt that the eyes of God were upon me, and that he was angry with me, for he "is angry with the wicked every day." Terror and dread came upon me, so that my carnal, sinful pleasure was completely spoiled; and although the severity of the sensation wore off, I never could forget the horror of soul I that day endured. Though nearly sixty years since, I have it still in remembrance.

One of the men above alluded to died young. He was one of the most exemplary youths in the neighbourhood. He was often at my father's house; and I well remember many things that I saw in him which caused my conscience to smite me sorely, both for my sins of omission and commission. Thus the Lord preaches by the exemplary conduct of his people, who are as "a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid." The other individual lived to the age of eighty-two, and was buried in our graveyard under my parlour window; and for twenty-three years before his death sat under my ministry. We were true friends; and as a token of it, he ordered his executor that after his death he should bring me his favourite arm-chair. For many years I had it in my bedroom, and kneeled down by it morning and evening to pour out my heart in prayer and thanksgiving to the Lord, who wounded my conscience on that memorable day, when I was running headlong to destruction in the highway of sin. How true it is "that the Lord is found of them that sought him not, and made manifest unto them that asked not after him." Since the enlargement of the chapel, I have removed this chair into the vestry, it being a more suitable place for it, where I

wish it to remain as long as I live, and after I am dead.

In one of my Sunday rambles with my companions we got as far as Simpson Clough, four miles from the village where I lived. It turned out rather wet. My conscience began to smite me; my disobedience, Sabbath-breaking, running away from home, instead of going with my father to the chapel, would, in spite of all my endeavours to stifle these convictions, incessantly haunt me. As we returned towards home, we had to pass by an Independent chapel, called Bamford Chapel, where I had been several times with my father. As we passed I could see the minister in the pulpit, and hear the sound of his voice, but could not distinguish the words. I stood still, and as I looked at him, the feelings of my soul I well remember, and will describe as truly as I can. He appeared to me to be a holy happy man, in the way to heaven himself, labouring with earnestness and zeal to lead others there also. I thought that all that were in the chapel must be good people, travelling to heaven, but that I was in the road to hell. I remember, as though it was but yesterday, saying within myself, "Oh how happy should I be, were I with my father in that chapel, as I have sometimes been!" I felt, too, that I would have given the world, had it been at my command, could I have been with him in that happy heavenly place, which in that day it appeared to my imagination. But, alas! Wretch that I was, wandering up and down upon the Lord's day, like a fugitive and a vagabond, to the continual grief of my parents, and violating incessantly the dictates of conscience. I felt in my soul the Lord was angry with me, and went home as though I had been stealing something, and was afraid to be seen. Truly may it be said, "The way of the transgressors is hard," for so I found it. My companions in sin could not tell what to make of me, I was sunk so low in my mind. I endeavoured to make the best of it, and hide my apprehensions from them as well as I was able. I could not join, however, their foolish, vain conversation as I had been wont to do, and they thought it strange that I did not run with them to the same excess of riot.

The Independent minister's name was Parsons; he has now been dead some years. Before the Lord took him,

we became familiarly acquainted; so that he supplied for us at Hope Chapel several times.

After the above circumstance I began to be very miserable in my Sunday rambles. Conscience seemed to speak louder and louder. If I saw any one going to or coming from church or chapel, he was a terror to me. An awful dread of God came upon my mind, which sank my spirit and spoiled all my carnal pleasures. When I went to bed, especially after one of my Sunday days of trangressions, I could not sleep. My sins began to stare me in the face, and burden my conscience. I was sometimes angry with myself for giving way to such feelings, and in my heart said to the Lord, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee. I am only a youth, not yet fifteen years of age. I have had no young days of wordly pleasure. When I get older, and married and settled in the world, I will begin to think about death and eternity, and turn to thee, repent, and mend my life, be good, and do good, and go to the chapel, and live for another world." How fain would I have put the Lord off! I was angry with him too, because he kept wounding me in my spirit. I kicked against the pricks, and in my heart said, "Thou shalt not reign over me." But all my resisting and fighting were in vain, for who can withstand "the mighty God of Jacob, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all that therein is?" The Lord made good the truth of these words in my soul: "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." There was long and continued struggling ere I was brought to lie passive in his hands, like clay in the hands of the potter. I do not care who nor what they are, nor how proud and haughty soever they be, nor however determined to have their own foolish, vain, sinful ways, and enjoy themselves, if the same great almighty power arrest them which laid hold of me, it will bring them down into the dust of self-abasement at Jesus's feet. I have proved the truth of Job's word: "For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet." (Job xiii. 27.) They are called

a people sought out; and truly the Lord sought me out.

> "But see how heaven's indulgent care
> Attends there wanderings here and there;
> Still hard at heel, where'er they stray,
> With pricking thorns to hedge their way."

Among other vices I got entangled with was card-playing, which I found a very enticing thing. The oftener I played, and got to understand the game, the more bewitched I grew and embraced every opportunity that I could, unknown to my parents, in order to follow this foolish and often dangerous amusement. The following circumstance, however, put a stop to it. I had been putting by my half-pence for some weeks, until I had got a little stock of money, when two of my companions and I went one night to play at cards with an elderly female, a person of some property. With this woman we began to play. Being but boys, however, and young in the game, she began to win our money, and so entangled were we all, that we never thought of the time until she had got all we had. We were then at liberty to go home. On looking at the clock, we found it was between two and three o'clock in the morning. I began to tremble for fear. I had never been out so late before, and how to get into the house I could not tell. When I got to the door, I pulled off my shoes, thinking to get in, and perhaps to bed, unperceived. I opened the door as quietly as possible, shutting it carefully after me; but immediately I heard my father jump out of bed and walk accross the chamber floor. He met me on the stairs, and I soon felt the chastisement I deserved. He beat me severely, and threatened further discipline on the morrow. I got to bed, but could not sleep. I saw the wickedness and craftiness of the old woman in keeping us in her house until so late an hour in order to win our money. I was aware my father knew I had laid by what I could spare, and fully expected inquiry would be made what had become of it, also where I had been. What answers to make I could not tell. The thoughts also of a severer chastisement when I arose lay heavily on my mind. I felt also that such things as card-playing, stopping out late at night, grieving and disobeying my parents, were heinously offensive in the sight of God; and oh what a disgust did I feel in my very soul, as I lay, of

card-playing, and the like! and so sick was I made of it that I resolved never to play a game at cards again so long as I lived. Thanks to the Lord for embittering my mind against that which I had been so fond of and addicted to. From that time to the present, I have hated the very sight of cards. They are well called "the devil's books;" as such I view them. When I see or hear tell of their being used in the houses of professors of religion, as games of what is called innocent amusement, I always fear such persons give but sorry proof of their being called by grace, and that they are professors only, not possessors of true vital godliness. If they were, it would teach them to obey that very seasonable exhortation: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. v. 22.) Such amusements as card-playing may suit many whose religion is but a Sunday garb, to be pulled off with their holiday clothes, but will not be resorted to by such as "fear the Lord all the day long." The old woman has long been dead, leaving a family, some of which are since dead also, and the property wasted long ago. One of the individuals of our party now lies dead at the time I write this, having drunk himself to death. Who has made me to differ? "By the grace of God I am what I am." I have often been led to think, under such feelings, of the words of Nehemiah: "But so did not I, because of the fear of the Lord."

I do not remember that I was ever given to profane swearing. One circumstance of the kind, however, I do well recollect. It was on a Lord's day evening, in the summer season. I had been at the chapel, and Mr. Robinson, our minister, was that evening to preach at my father's. After tea the latter said to me very kindly, "John, you may go out about an hour until service time; but be sure you are not too late for the preaching." I promised, and fully meant to stand to my word. As soon as I got out, I heard that my companions were at the river, fishing. I was exceedingly fond of the sport, and could not withstand the temptation; so off I set, and joined their diversions. I had not been long amongst them before one of the lads knocked my hat off. It fell into the water, and almost spoiled it. Hereupon I was so enraged that I began to curse and swear. This pleased some of my companions exceedingly, especially such as were addicted to that vice. My conscience smote

me fiercely. I felt I was a wicked, wretched sinner, unfit for the company of any but such reprobates, but I had not courage to go home and leave them.

After preaching was over and the people gone home, my father came into the wood to seek me. He did not call, but stood still until I observed him. Immediately I ran towards him, and passed him in the field. He said he would teach me better than to absent myself at such times contrary to his orders. Solomon says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." My father did not spare the rod that night, for he took me into the back-yard and beat me so severely that I could hardly turn myself in bed, I was so sore, for some time. This was a night of sorrow such as I shall never forget. A sorely wounded conscience within, and a sore body without, I felt ashamed that I had done wrong, and not that hatred which I had felt heretofore against my father. I knew that I deserved chastising, and I trust it had a good effect upon my mind. I have often wondered at my father's forbearance, seeing that I was so disobedient while so young; and hundreds of times have I thought what must have been the feelings of his mind when he went to chapel and found I was absent, despising both correction and reproof, and setting both precept and example at defiance.

How sore and wicked a thing it is for children to slight and disobey their parents! "Honour thy father and thy mother," is the first commandment with promise. Children are exhorted to obey their parents in the Lord; "Cursed is he that setteth light upon his father and mother."

One Lord's day morning, my father being determined I should go to chapel, made me set off before him. Notwithstanding all my former convictions, I went on as careless and as unconcerned as ever. Gallio-like, I cared for none of these things.

But the set time to favour Zion was come. I was walking alone on the footpath in the field next to the chapel when the Lord arrested me. There came such a power and solemnity upon my mind as overwhelmed me. I stood still, trembling, and burst into a flood of tears. I felt the powerful hand of God had laid fast hold of my poor soul. Death, the day of judgment, and the realities of a vast and awful eternity oppressed my thoughts and harrowed up my feelings in a manner I can never describe.

As I stood thus distressed, I saw others coming to the chapel, and went aside into the graveyard to dry up my tears before I entered the place; but I could not, so I entered, hanging my head, and covering my face with my pocket-handkerchief, which prevented my father and others near me seeing that I was overwhelmed in tears. I tried to get rid of the feeling, but could not. The arrows of the Lord stuck fast in me, and his hand pressed me sore. I had a wounded spirit, a heart broken with godly sorrow for sin; and in my very soul I sat trembling before the Lord. I was so distressed that I could pay little or no attention to what the minister said. He did not appear to have a crumb for such a miserable, wretched sinner as I was. I remained all day in a weeping frame of spirit, and returned at night with very different feelings from those with which I left home in the morning. I had a heavy heart, which made me stoop down and hang my head like a bulrush. I felt feeble and sore broken. I roared by reason of the disquietude of my heart. I longed to be alone, for my poor soul was filled with sighs and groans; nor could I shake off these convictions as I had done previously. I tried again and again, but found it "hard to kick against the pricks." I have fully proved the truth of those words: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." God's covenant of grace and salvation, that is ordered in all things and sure, runs thus: "I will, saith the Lord, put my laws in their inward parts, and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." God's "I will," and "They shall," shall stand firm, until every elect vessel of mercy is called by grace and landed safe in glory. Poor rebels may, and do, kick and fight against the Lord, but they shall neither prosper nor prevail.

How sweet the words of Jesus: "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." What an unspeakable mercy that it is so! Had it been left to our own free will, not one of Adam's fallen race would ever have been saved: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" "It is of grace, that the promise of life and salvation might be sure to all the seed."

About this time, the sudden death of my schoolmaster very much affected me. I had for some time gone to what

is called a night school, in Rochdale. One Friday evening, a little before the regular time of breaking up, another boy and myself had finished our tasks. As we were going out of the school, the master was standing at the door, and he very pleasantly said, "Well, lads, have you done your work?" We said, "Yes." He then bade us good-night, as though pleased with our diligence. Thus we parted, leaving him apparently in good health. The Sunday following I went to the chapel. Between morning and afternoon services, at the place where persons from a distane usually dined, in the course of conversation, one of the friends said, "Mr. Griffiths, the schoolmaster, died very suddenly yesterday." I looked at him who gave the report, and trembled. Death and eternal realities presented themselves to my view in such a solemn manner as I trust I shall never forget. I hope he was a gracious man, having been a member at the Baptist church at Rochdale, and an occasional preacher. He left a widow and several children to mourn his loss.

The Lord wrought very powerfully in my soul by his Holy Spirit at this time, leading me into the vast importance of the language of Moses: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Thus I was taught to consider my latter end. The death of my schoolmaster was overruled by the Lord, to cause me to feel the uncertainty of life, and that I had not a day to call my own. I wondered greatly how it would be with me in that awful hour when the dread summons was served upon me. And so much affected was I with this circumstance, that after he was buried I went one day to the door of his dwelling-house, merely to look at the spot where he stood when he bade my schoolfellow and me "Good night." I then walked through the streets the way they took him to his last resting-place. Here, with solemn feelings, I stood by the grave, more and more convinced of the error of my ways. Sin, that accursed thing the Lord hates, "who has set our iniquities before him, our secret sins in the light of his countenance," appeared to my view hateful beyond all that I could conceive. I felt a great desire to live a new life, and to forsake the company and conversation of the ungodly, and to live for another world. These impressions I never could afterwards shake off fully from my mind.

Whilst I was thus exercised with eternal realities, the Lord sent a malignant fever into the village, and several died of it, amongst whom was one that had been an intimate companion of mine, and about my own age. When his death was announced, I heard an ungodly presumptuous wretch say, "God d—n John Whitehead's soul to hell!" At the sound of these awful words my soul trembled; my whole frame shook. I never heard words from the lips of anyone that filled my mind with such horror. Their sound followed me wherever I went: "The soul, the never-dying soul, a damned soul." These words were almost continually upon my mind; the inquiry with me was, "What would become of mine?"

I attended the funeral of this youth, and found the Lord powerfully working in my mind, leading me to meditate incessantly upon death and eternity, weaning me more and more from my wicked companions and sinful ways. I was so distressed about death and eternal things, and how I should escape the wrath to come, that I had scarcely any rest day or night. I was weary of my life. I would have taken refuge in infidelity, thinking how happy I should be if I could have persuaded myself that my soul and body would die together. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, laboured hard with this temptation to persuade me there was no future state, either of rewards or punishments; that we should all die like the beasts that perish. When this temptation had the predominance, it was sweet to my wearied thoughts. I felt a little more at ease, and was anxious that this awful delusion might be true, in order that my soul should have some respite. In my great anxiety I put this question to my father: "When my body dies, will not my soul die with it, and all be over?" He very solemnly and gravely said, "No. When thy body dies it will return to the dust, till the resurrection morning, and thy soul will live for ever, in heaven or hell." O how these words sank into my soul: "Live for ever, either in heaven or hell!" Would to God I had never been born, or that I had been anything save an accountable being to Him who is a God of knowledge, who weighs actions, searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men. The Lord made me to know that there is a God of holiness and justice. I felt his terror in my soul, and that in very truth

there is an awful hell; for, as David said, "The pangs of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul."

I had many inward cryings to the Lord before I began to go aside for private prayer. I well remember the first time I retired for this purpose. It was to me then a matter of necessity. One morning, when I was at work with my father, I was so bowed down with sin and the terrors of the Lord upon my conscience that I could not rest. I felt I must fall down before the Lord, against whom I had sinned, and confess my sins. Having no private room in my father's house where I could kneel down unobserved, I laid aside my work, and went to the corner of a field adjoining the village, where I knew there was a dry pit that would screen me from view. Here I kneeled down and prayed. I had kneeled down many times by my mother's lap and at my bedside to repeat the Lord Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed, and when I got up had thought all was right; I had done my duty and said my prayers; but with what a different feeling of soul did I now bow before the Lord. Repeating prayers would not now satisfy my mind. I was very dark and ignorant, and had little to say; I could only tell the Lord what a wicked sinner I had been, and pray for mercy like the poor publican: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" My prayers were more in heart-felt sighs and groans than words.

From this time I began to go to this place three times a day for prayer; a bird began to build her nest near me. Before the Lord laid hold on me, I used to go into the woods with my companions to seek for and rob and plunder them of their eggs and young; but my conscience was now made so tender I was afraid to harm the meanest thing that lived. I was cautious not to disturb her, and went to my devotions as quietly as I could. She became in consequence so familiar that she would sit upon her nest, whilst I lifted up my heart and eyes to Him who openeth his hand, and supplieth the wants of every living thing. She brought forth her young at the appointed time, and I soon lost these unconscious witnesses of the distress of my soul. I mention this simple circumstance to show the effect the grace of God has upon the heart. I continued to resort to this

place until the grass was cut in the adjoining meadows, and haytime came on, when it became too public, and I had to retire to some woods near at hand.

Although I was brought up in a religious family, and taught to read the Bible, and to go to chapel and prayer-meetings, and heard many religious conversations, I knew no more of Christ, as the way of salvation, than a heathen who never heard the name of Jesus. It was doing good and being good that I thought would save me; and I set about it in good earnest. I thought how happy I should be if at death I could turn my pale face to the wall, and look back upon a well-spent life. When under preaching, if the minister spoke of death and eternity, the judgment of the great day, an awful hell, and a joyful heaven, I returned home, making my good resolutions and vows, to wit, "that I would neither do wrong, nor speak wrong, nor think wrong." I was fully determined to have all right, and nothing deficient, if possible, but would do the best I could. I soon found, however, that I frequently missed it, either in one thing or another, and wondered how it was that I could not manage better. I then began again, and again, with vows and determinations; but broke them nearly as soon as they were made. I thought that sin and all manner of sinfulness and depravity must be rooted in me, or I should surely contrive to manage better; for whenever I was led to examine the spirit and even the letter of the law, which demands perfection in thoughts, words, and deeds, love to God with all our heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, I was always brought in guilty. I then besought the Lord to have patience with me, and I would pay him all. Thus I worked hard, going about to establish my own righteousness which is of the law, and tugged and toiled upon law ground, but grew no better, but rather worse; not worse as it regards outward sins, for where there is a sorely wounded conscience it will keep the sinner from running into sin, or delighting in it. I felt worse in my feelings and views of myself. So weak and helpless too was I that I was not able to keep one good resolution, nor think one good thought. My spirit sank within me, and I often thought no poor wretch was so plagued and harassed, though I still determined to save and help myself. A friend lent me Bunyan's "Heavenly Footman." "So

run that ye may obtain." I read it and my Bible diligently, confessing my sins, and begging the Lord that he would help me to mend my ways. I went regularly to chapel and prayer-meetings, did all I could to be religious, and toiled incessantly in the path of duty.

About this time, the Independents opened a room in Toad Lane, Rochdale; and after I had been twice at Hall Fold on a Sunday, I went there in the evening. I had got rid of all my sinful companions; for when they found I began to carry a Bible about with me I became a terror to them, and they shunned my company. I had set up for a most zealous professor of religion, and people began to notice my conduct, and to express their admiration at the great change there was in me. I well remember hearing my mother and two neighbour women in conversation concerning me; when my mother told them the great trouble I had given my father, in refusing to go with him to chapel, but such a change had taken place that I had forsaken all my old companions and ways, and was never so happy as when I was in company with old men, and going with them to the chapel and to prayer-meetings, which were often held in private houses on week-day evenings. This fed my pride, and I began to think how much better I was than others who lived unconcernedly about the things of another world, for as yet I knew little of the hidden evils of my heart to what I have felt since.

Having got the outside of the cup and platter made tolerably clean I was mightily carried away, for a time, with a notion of my being so regular in the means of grace. How true it is that "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;" as will be seen anon. I now became so full of religion that when Whitsuntide came I went on the Wednesday to the double lecture preached annually that day at Hall Fold Chapel, the place where the two men were going when I was amongst the cock-fighters. Immediately after the service was over, I returned home, got my dinner, and set off to the Baptist Association meeting, which that year was held at Rochdale. I heard the letters read from the different churches; all appeared so nice and heavenly that some of the people were much affected, and shed tears. In the evening an aged minister, of the name of Hyde, preached from Phil. i. 18: "What, then?

Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." He was very earnest, and spoke as though his whole heart and soul was in his subject. I did not know Christ for myself, as, in the reading of Moses, the veil was not taken from my heart. I was pleased to see so many ministers there, and thought it an honour even to be in the same place with them.

The next morning I went again to the Association meeting. Mr. Hurst, of Bacup, opened the service, giving out a hymn, with reading and prayer. The chapel was crowded to excess, and many had to remain outside who had come a long way. It was agreed that they should adjourn to the Methodist chapel, which had been promised if needed. Stedman, of Bradford, and Fawcett, of Hebden Bridge, preached. All, however, that I recollect is, that the latter appeared very humble, solemn, and devout. After this service, Mr. Roby, of Manchester, preached in the Independent place of worship, from Ps. lxxxviii. 3: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." This sermon produced a great effect. Some, whom I had known to have been long in the way, stood before him in tears. The place was so crowded that many were afraid of the flooring giving way.

I also attended the regular prayer-meeting amongst the Independents in the evening. Matthew vi. was read by a plain, simple, honest-hearted old Christian, who was asked to give his thoughts upon it. When he began, it was as as though he had said to me, "I am going to describe what thy religion is; to wit, the religion here spoken of, which is that of the scribes and pharisees, who make long prayers, use vain repetitions, and love to be heard for their much speaking." "These," he said, "were looking to their own goodness as the ground of their acceptance with God." This is where it cut me the most keenly, as I was for saving and helping myself. In summing up, he said, "Christ pronounced more woes and curses against such characters than he did against the openly profane, such as whoremongers, adulterers, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and the like; and that publicans and harlots were nearer the kingdom of heaven than these." This poor illiterate man's commentary on the chapter did more to pull down my self-

righteousness than all the preaching I had heard that week. Down fell my pretty Babel-building about my ears. My refuge of lies was swept away. My countenance fell. I was ashamed and confounded, and could scarcely lift up my head. As I went home I reasoned thus within myself: "Well, I have done the best I can; and if being good, and doing good, going to chapel, and serving the Lord, will not do, I cannot tell what will; and if, after all, I am no nearer heaven than the openly profane, it is of no use beginning again, for I can do no more than I have done; so I will even give it all up at once for lost, and if I am doomed to everlasting destruction, I will go like other folks, and just take my fling in sin." In pursuance of this resolution, I got up next morning, and set off to Manchester races without my breakfast, and only fourpence in my pocket, having more than twenty miles to travel there and back.

But O what a day was this! Never shall I forget it while I live. I had not gone far before I met a school-fellow coming from Rochdale to see me. I told him where I was going, and he said he would go with me. I entreated him not to go, fearing his friends might blame me for it; but go he would. When we got to Middleton, which is half-way between Rochdale and Manchester, I began to be faint, and for the first time went into a public-house, "The Hare and Hounds," and called for beer. I was so young that I felt ashamed, and no doubt looked bashful enough as I did it. As we sat in the room near the window, a coach came to the door. On the dickey sat Mr. Davis, Baptist minister at Byrom Street Chapel, Liverpool. He had sat in the pulpit the day before during the time Stedman and Fawcett preached. The sight of him was like a dagger to my heart. As I looked at him I said to myself, "He is a good man; he is no hypocrite nor pharisee, but is in the right way to heaven. As for me, it is all over. My case is desperate. I am out of the secret. I have sought for the right way, but cannot find it." Such was the state of my mind, I was sorely put to it whether to go back or go forward. Hundreds of people were hurrying along to the race-ground, some on foot, others on horseback and in carriages, and I got hurried on amongst them I hardly know how. When we got upon the race-ground, my companion soon left me, and went to the soldiers, he being particularly

fond of such company. This sorely grieved me, as I was afraid he might enlist, and I often wished I had never come. I could take no pleasure in anything I saw or heard. I had a guilty conscience, which spoiled all. When the horses were running, hundreds rode from one side of the course to the other, in order to see more of the race. They galloped fast. I felt as if the earth trembled under us, and I was afraid lest it would open and swallow us up, as of old the camps of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. I became so alarmed and distressed that I could not stay amongst them any longer, but withdrew on one side out of the crowd, so miserable and wretched that I could not join them in their ungodly sports. I found I could not go back into the world; and as it respected religion, I had done the best I could, and that would not do, and what to do next, or what would become of me, I could not tell.

Upon the race-ground, however, I could not stay; so, before the races were over, I was obliged to leave and make my way towards home. Before I entered into Rochdale, I met two men that I had frequently seen at the Independent meeting-room, who were at the prayer-meeting the night before. One of these men had asked him who read the sixth chapter of Matthew to make a few comments upon it, which was done, and produced the effect I have above described. The sight of these godly men was a terror to me. They looked at me with grief and surprise, judging from my appearance where I had been, for I was covered with dust. They asked me if I had been to the races. I said, "Yes," and passed on as quickly as I could. When I got into the town, I had to pass the door of a Mr. Brooks, grocer, who usually entertained the Independent ministers who came to supply. Before I got to the shop, I saw him standing at the door, and I felt as though I would rather have sunk into the ground than pass by him. He looked at me with surprise. He inquired, "Have you been to the races?" I trembled as I answered, "Yes," and on I went as fast as I could. As I got nearer home I was quite worn down with fatigue. I had a hungry belly, a tired body, and and a guilty conscience to cope with; and how to face my father, who had begun to think better things of me, I could not tell. I shall never forget my feelings as I entered the house and met his frown. It was indeed a painful meeting

to both of us; nor can I describe the anguish of his mind at my sudden drawing back into sin, bidding, as it were, defiance both to Divine and parental authority. He threatened to chastise me sorely, and would have put his threat into immediate execution, had not my eldest brother stood between us. Said he, "Let him alone; for by his looks he seems to have had enough of it." I was ready to cry like a child, and was so full I could scarcely speak. My looks, however, spoke more eloquently than my tongue: "O my brother, if you knew the agony of my soul, you would indeed say, 'I have had enough of it.'" I crept away to bed in a very distressed state, both of body and mind. Trembling and anguish had taken hold upon me, and I was almost on the borders of despair.

Since this circumstance took place, often as I have passed through Middleton on my Master's business, have I looked at the "Hare and Hounds" public-house, and the window where I sat when the coach came to the door, and thought of the terrible struggle in my mind, and have thanked and blessed the Lord that though he suffered me to go forward, he would not let me stay in the camp of the ungodly.

My schoolfellow whom I left with the soldiers did not enlist at that time, but as he grew up he became increasingly fond of them. His father died, and his mother married again. The executors then bought him a commission in the army. Many years rolled round, and I never heard a word respecting him; until one day, in company with one of the executors, I inquired what had become of their young charge. "Ah," said he, "the lad might have done well had he not become dissipated, and brought himself into great trouble and disgrace. He came to an awful end, blowing out his brains with a pistol in his own bedroom." The words of Nehemiah came to my mind: "But so did not I, because of the fear of the Lord," which is

> "A fence against evil, by which we resist
> The world, flesh, and the devil, and imitate Christ."

When I have thought of my elder brother standing between my father and me to ward off the blows, and entreating him to let me alone, I have been led to think of Christ, my spiritual "Elder Brother" that stood between an angry God in his broken law and me a law-breaker. The hand of Divine justice was upon "the man of his right hand,

and upon the Son of Man, whom he hath made strong for himself." "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." It has often filled my soul with holy wonder and astonishment to think that it should please the Lord to bruise his beloved Son, that had done no sin, to put him to grief, to make his soul an offering for the sins of such a rebel as I, who did evil in his sight even as I could. This is one of the great mysteries of godliness which will be the wonder and admiration of the redeemed of the Lord for ever and ever.

But to return. I got up next morning stiff and sore, and, if possible, more miserable than ever. It was a fine day, and being holiday time I went into the fields and lay down. What to do I could not tell. I felt I could not go back into the world and join my old companions in sin, and to have no better religion than the scribes and pharisees, and be nothing but a hypocrite after all, was, according to Christ's own words, even more offensive in his sight. I was at a complete stand. Which way to move I could not tell; so I began to beg the Lord not only to have mercy upon me, a guilty, miserable, dark, ignorant sinner, but also that he would teach me the right way, and keep me in it. Thus I lay pondering over my fearful condition, sighing and groaning like a man bound in fetters.

Several weeks afterwards, I was in a very unsettled state of mind, hanging, as it were, between the world and the people of God. The immortal principle of grace which, I trust, was implanted in my soul, would not let me be happy as formerly in the ways of sin, when my whole heart and soul delighted in joining the multitude to do evil. Like Noah's dove, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot, nor could my poor weary soul find rest in the follies and vanities of this sinful world, though I felt the flesh at times longing after them, like the children of Israel at the Red Sea, when they could see no way of escape, wishing themselves again among the flesh-pots in Egypt. To go forward in religion upon old covenant ground I began to see would avail nothing. I was ashamed to go again

amongst the people of God, yet when Sunday came I could not be easy at staying at home; I was therefore obliged, as it were, to go again to Hall Fold Chapel, though nothing that I heard preached had any effect upon my mind, either to condemn or encourage me; so to get a little comfort to my soul, I went at nights to Rochdale, amongst the Independents, where a few that I have every reason to believe loved and feared the Lord met together.

Rochdale races came on a few weeks afterwards. The Sunday night previously I was at the place of meeting in Rochdale, when the minister spoke from these words: "And when they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." This sermon had a great effect upon my mind, especially the latter part, when he described the awful state of those against whom the door was for ever shut. He spoke largely upon the sufferings of the damned in hell, and exhorted all who were not ready to begin that night, and turn and repent, and never rest till they got into a state of readiness for death, that they, like the wise virgins, might enter into heaven, and not, as the foolish virgins, against whom the door of mercy, as he called it, was for ever shut, be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This discourse, being very much in a legal strain, suited my working spirit. I was always for doing something towards my own salvation, and therefore it appeared according to the tenor of this discourse there was something to be done by me, as the ground of my acceptance with God, and I must begin and get it done immediately, in order that I might be ready when the midnight cry was made: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

As I went home that night I reasoned thus with myself: "I must begin again and repent, and get ready, for as the minister says I have not a day nor an hour to call my own, I may die before to-morrow; and what an awful thing should the door of heaven be for ever shut against me, and I be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone."

As I was pondering these things over, it came into my mind that it was Rochdale race week, and I felt a great jealousy in my spirit lest I should be tempted to go. My natural fondness for such carnal amusements and my weak-

ness in the hour of temptation made me to fear and tremble lest I should fall. It was a fine summer's evening, all still and quiet. When I reached Shaw Clough, I stood still upon the footpath under a large thorn that grew in the hedge, and said, "I will not go to the races this week, but will make a more firm resolution than I have ever yet made, one that will deter me from going." I stood thinking what would be the most solemn and binding vow, and such as would be strong enough to prevent me from running headlong to destruction; because I had made so many vows and broken them that I must (as I then thought) make another more firm and binding than any I had yet discovered. Studying earnestly what it should be, a sudden idea crossed my mind, and I spoke the words audibly as though the Lord was with me in the road: "Well, Lord, if I go to the races this week, thou shalt damn my soul and send me to hell." Solemn, awful and presumptuous words they were! My soul and body shudder while I write them. Nevertheless I went on pleased at the idea, and quite buoyed up in my mind, believing that it would keep me, that I should never dare to go in the face of such an awful imprecation.

On the Monday and Tuesday following, the publicans began to set up their huts or tents; and as the race-day drew near, the whole village where I lived was in motion. I could not move out of the house but I heard the races in almost every person's mouth. This gentleman's horse and the other was coming to run for so much money. The betting was in favour of such and such a horse, and there were shows of various kinds in which wonders were to be seen. My mind began to be entangled. The race-day came, and there was a general move, professors and profane, young and old; the village was almost drained of its inhabitants. My father and I were left alone in the house, my mother having gone away to see a friend. I went into a field adjoining the village, where I could see the race-ground covered with a multitude of people. The temptation became stronger than ever. The enemy said, "Go. Such and such a one have gone, and they are church and chapel-goers. There can surely be no great harm in seeing the horses run." Thus, as the apostle James has it, "I was tempted and drawn away of my own lusts, and enticed."

Off I set through the fields as fast as I could, and soon got amongst the crowd. I would fain have taken pleasure as formerly amongst the thousands that were around me; but I could not do so. I was so wretched and miserable I was obliged to leave long before the races were over, as I could not stay and take delight in such sports, like many professors of religion I saw upon the ground; and I wondered how it could be, for I tried to be cheerful like them; but in vain. My spirit sank within me, my countenance fell, and like Bunyan's "pilgrim," I was obliged to turn my back upon the City of Destruction.

Returning home through the fields, I turned round and made a stand, and looked at the vast multitude before me. There were the cries of the beggars by the wayside, the cursing and shouting of the people, the sound of the drum and fifes as the soldiers were beating up for recruits;—I saw and felt the folly and vanity of all. I beheld, and was so distressed I thought my very heart would break, and I could not refrain from tears. (While I now write, the remembrance of it affects me so deeply that my heart is full and my eyes filled with tears.) I felt in my inmost soul that I had for ever done with such ungodly sports, and bade them a final adieu,—so weaned from them that I could say with Dr. Watts:

"My soul forsakes her vain delight,
And bids the world farewell,
Base as the dirt beneath my feet,
And mischievous as hell.

"No longer will I ask your love,
Nor seek your friendship more;
The happiness that I approve
Is not within your power."

It is nearly fifty years since this took place, and by such trying dispensations the Lord has up to this time put an end to two things. The first is, making fleshly resolutions; for I found that the most solemn and awful that I could make would not keep me from sin. I was so weak and helpless that by my own strength I could not stand in the trying hour, and that the Lord must hold me up. Ever since, therefore, instead of making resolutions, if it be something that I wish to be preserved from, the cry of my soul has been hundreds of times, "Lord, keep me and preserve

me. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." How sweet and precious have the words of Hannah been to my soul: "He will keep the feet of his saints." The prayer of Jabez is often upon my mind: "Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested." (1 Chron. iv. 10.) That clause, "And that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me," has been a great blessing to my soul, and often my prayer before the Lord. After Peter's fall, we do not hear him say, "Though all the world deny thee, yet will not I." This great "I" had fallen; and henceforth the theme of his soul was: "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." In like manner I have proved that making resolutions in my own strength would not keep me from falling. The Lord has kept me growingly sensible of my own weakness, as Paul says: "For when I am weak, then am I strong,—strong in the Lord and the power of his might."

The second thing these trying dispensations put an end to was, going to races and all other places of carnal amusements. Up to this day the Lord has kept and preserved me unspotted from the world, for which I bless and praise His dear and precious name. In the course of my pilgrimage, I have seen many fall away from their profession, some into outward sin, and others into error, and I have many times trembled for fear, and thought of Paul's words: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." These words also are, and have been, very much upon my mind: "Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." I have reason to believe, from the conduct of my friends towards me, both at home, and in many parts of this island, that I am, far more than I deserve, esteemed by them for my work's sake. Left to myself, and exposed to temptation, I might, in some unguarded hour, fall so fearfully into sin as would cause my friends to be ashamed even to own my name, in place of its being, as I trust it is to them, better than precious ointment. It is my daily prayer that I may finish my course with joy, leaving no stain upon my character, nor the ministry which I have received

of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

The awful resolution I made not to visit the races was overruled by the Lord to humble me before him, and to make me thankful for his mercy and long-suffering to such a daring and presumptuous wretch. Long after this resolution was made, as I returned from the prayer meeting, I had to pass the spot where I made the vow, and I have stood under the thorn many times, thanking, blessing, and praising the Lord that He had not dealt with me after my own covenant, and sent me down to the regions of despair.

I have said within myself, "I stand here a monument of God's mercy and grace; for had He marked my iniquity, and dealt with me according to my sin, I should have been cut down as a cumberer of the ground. Instead of this, I am spared, and raised up by the Lord to stand upon the walls of Zion, to blow the silver trumpet of the everlasting Gospel, with a good hope, through grace, that the Lord will guide me by His counsel through this wilderness, and afterwards receive me to glory."

Since the Lord has put me into the ministry, the people commonly called the "Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion" have built a chapel at the place where I made the awful vow. I have several times preached their Sabbath School Anniversary sermons to large and attentive congregations. On these occasions I have been greatly humbled when I have thought where I was, and have rejoiced in the Lord's determination "that I should not perish, but come to repentance," and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ at this very place. The word of life the Lord has enabled me to preach on these occasions has been made a blessing to persons who have appeared before our church to declare what God hath done for their souls, especially one sermon from the following words: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus."

"Wonders of grace to God belong;
Repeat His mercies in your song."

Professors of religion going to races, theatres, balls, etc., has a very bad effect. It opens a door for sin, as others take liberty by their example. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousnsss."

My repeated falls into outward sin, the breaking of my most solemn resolutions, were to me an awful proof of the depravity of my nature and the evils of my heart, my weakness and helplessness as a poor guilty sinner before a just and holy God; and I felt more and more convinced that if my salvation depended upon me and my goodness I was undone for ever.

In this state of mind I went on one occasion to hear a man preach, who told us it was impossible for us to save ourselves. My soul felt the truth of this assertion. I could verily say "Amen" to it, having tried again and again, and found it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." He said afterwards, however, we must do the best we could, and look to Jesus Christ to make up our defects. "Well," said I, "this will do. At last I now see how it is that I am to be saved." I went home quite delighted, having found, as I then thought, the right way. "I will begin again, and do the best I can," said I, "and look to Christ to make up for me where I come short." But as the light and power of the Lord were made manifest in my soul, I found I had no "best" that I could bring forward and unite to the perfect work of Christ; and to attempt to sew the old cloth of my filthy rags and the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness together was making the rent worse. I now began to learn that salvation could not be by grace and by works, for I found that if anything was left for me to do, either in whole or in part, I never could be saved. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." The law demands purity in heart, thoughts, words, and deeds; and where this is not found, its awful voice is: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This is what the law saith to them who are under the law, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." The Lord stops the mouths of every elect vessel of mercy in this life, and makes them to feel they can never be justified by the law of works, but by the law of faith.

I now began to feel the truth of the language of the Church of God by Isaiah (lxiv. 6): "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

All my imaginary comeliness was turned into corruption; my mouth was stopped; I had not one good word to say of myself, not one promise to make to the Lord that I would be better and do better. I had made so many of these and broken them all that I trembled at the thoughts of making another. I felt that I was undone, and I had to cry out like the leper, "Unclean, unclean!" "Guilty, guilty!" I was indeed brought in guilty and condemned before him who "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men." The commandment came "with a convincing power and light." Sin revived, and I died to all hope of saving or helping myself. I felt that I was sinking in the "horrible pit and miry clay," shut up as in a prison, chained down; as David says: "I am shut up and cannot come forth." The sighs and groans that I felt in my poor soul I can never describe. I have often said, in the course of my ministry, that there is no prayer left upon record in the Bible that my soul has felt more powerfully than that of David in Psa. lxxix. 11: "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die." Those words also in Psa. cii. 19, 20, have often comforted my mind: "For the Lord, whose throne is in the heavens, hath said that he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death."

The soul that has never been shut up in this prison, nor felt the galling chain nor the burden of sin, and is a stranger to a broken heart, godly sorrow, and spiritual mourning for sin, can never enjoy the blessedness and preciousness of Christ, the great Prophet and High Priest of his Church. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn." What comfort can the soul receive that never felt its need of these blessings? My soul was now under a spirit of bondage and fear, weary and heavy laden; and as one of God's elect, I cried day and night unto him, retiring

into the woods and fields for reading, meditation, and prayer. My neighbours wondered what I could have to do so much in the woods. They followed me, to discover what I was about, and sometimes they found me reading my Bible or taking a solitary walk in deep meditation and breathings of soul to the Lord. They usually stood at a distance and looked at me, but could not tell what to make of such proceedings. Sometimes they found me on my knees engaged in prayer, and finding me thus, caused a great deal of talk in the village and through the country. They would often say one to another, "Have you heard about John Kershaw? He has been *catched* on his knees praying in Healey Hall Woods." Had I, like the woman, been taken in adultery, the wonder and public cry would not have been so great. One chapel-going man went so far as to say, "If I had seen him I would have thrown a clod at his head." This was told me one night going home, and my soul was at that time so bowed down and humbled in the dust before the Lord that I longed to kneel down, even in the road, to confess my sin, and to call upon the Lord for deliverance. Some few pitied me, and said I was going out of my mind; but the greater part taunted me, and laughed me to scorn, saying "I was gone crazy." Thus I became the topic of general conversation, and, like David, "the song of the drunkard." Often have I kneeled down under the hedges, so cast down with a feeling sight and sense of my sins and the terrors of the Lord that, like Joshua the high priest (Zech. iii. 1, 2), in the filthy garments of my own righteousness, with Satan, the accuser of the brethren, at my right hand to resist me; and even if the wind has ruffled the leaves of the trees around me, the hair has seemed to rise upon my head, and my heart beat with fear, lest the Lord should cut me down, and the enemy of souls drag me down to perdition. I was for a time shut up as in despair, wishing I had never been born,—shut up to the faith in Christ, or as the apostle hath it, "unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." (Gal. iii. 23.)

In this perplexed state of mind I went to Bacup, and heard Mr. Hurst preach from Isa. xlv. 22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Under this sermon I was led to see the ability of Christ to save unto the uttermost the chief of

sinners; that the law of God they had broken, he had fulfilled for them; that he had "redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, and finished the work his Father gave him to do;" and that there was everything done by him, and treasured up in him, that I stood in need of. As I sat and heard these things opened up, there was such light, life and power attended the word that I said within myself, "I shall never forget what I have heard this day." I went home rejoicing that there was a new and living way, whereby God could be just and save poor guilty sinners. The name, blood, and righteousness of Jesus Christ became precious to my soul; so that I could not forbear saying, "This is the Christ, and the salvation my soul stands in need of." It did my soul good to see that the whole work was finished by Christ upon the cross, and that there was nothing left for me to do, as the ground of my acceptance with God. I had proved that I could do nothing but add sin to sin, and make the rent worse.

My soul now began to hunger and thirst after Christ and his finished free grace salvation. I read my Bible as with new eyes, and heard preaching with new ears. I had a confidence wrought in me that Christ was able to save me; but the question arose in my mind, "Is he willing to save me?" I could now say with the poor leper, "Thou canst, if thou wilt, make me clean."

In this state I was held up for months, growingly persuaded of the ability and all-sufficiency of Christ Jesus, but waiting, longing, and praying for a manifestation of my personal interest in his salvation by the remission of sins. Under preaching, when the minister described the feelings of a truly convinced sensible sinner, who was a mourner in Zion, and a hungerer and thirster after Christ and his righteousness, my soul was encouraged. I felt a great love to the brethren; the tabernacles of the Lord were amiable to my soul, my Bible was my chief companion; a throne of grace was often resorted to, where I had sometimes a little encouragement, while at other times I was shut up in my own soul, and could not come forth, but in soul-pantings and breathings, with sighs and groans. I could not keep from the prayer-meetings that were held at different friends' houses in various parts of the neighbourhood; dark nights and dirty lanes did not prevent me from going. When

I had no company, I went by myself. My heart and soul were following hard after God, the living God, even the God of salvation.

The word being blessed to my soul under the ministry of Mr. Hurst, for he was to me a servant of the most high God, that showed me the way of salvation, I often went to hear him, though I had five or six miles to go. I found out the place where the friends from a distance got their dinners, and, for the sake of their company and conversation, I went amongst them. The minister was generally with them till he was called to his dinner, which he got in another room. He observed me amongst them from time to time, and at length said, "My lad, where do you come from?" I told him; and he asked whose son I was. I replied, "William Kershaw's." He said, "I knew your father and mother before you were born," and inquired why I came so far, and by myself. I then told him a little of what the Lord had done for my soul, and the comfort I had received under his ministry, as above related. And from that time to the day of his death we were growingly attached to each other; so that many persons wondered at him showing such kindness to a mere youth. The last time he was at Rochdale, as he returned home he called upon me. He was then got so old and infirm that it was with great difficulty he could with help alight from his horse. The conversation of that day I I hope never to forget. He told me he had been called an Antinomian above forty years, and pointed out wherein he had differed from many of his brethren in the ministry. First, In reference to Adam, who he believed was not possessed of spiritual blessings before his fall. These blessings are treasured up in Christ, the covenant Head of the church, and can never be lost, according to Eph. i. 3; Col. i. 19. Secondly, The extent of the call and invitations of the gospel, which he believed to be special, or particular; the characters invited being described in the invitations, viz., such as labour and are heavy laden, hungering and thirsting after Christ and his righteousness. (Matt. xi. 28; Isa. lv. 1.) Thirdly, As to the doctrine of progressive sanctification. He said the old man of sin, as some affirm, does not get better and better, but will remain the old man of sin as long as we are in the body. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are

contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." "What shall ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies," the flesh and the Spirit. The old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, will be the Christian's plague while in this vile body. The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, will fight against the old man, until grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. He spoke largely upon these things, and it was very instructive and edifying to my mind. I went with him part of the way home; and after we parted I turned round in the road and watched him as long as I could. I cannot describe the regard I had for him; I esteemed him highly in love for his work's sake. He was born in Rochdale, and was raised up by the great Head of the church, as from the college of fishermen. The Lord placed him upon the walls of Zion at Bacup, where he stood valiant for the truth during the long period of forty-six years. The Lord greatly blessed him; for before his death he had a congregation of over 800 people. The memory of this man of God is sweet to me. He preached the gospel fully, freely, and faithfully, and was an example to the flock of God, in every good word and work. A little before his death he sent for me; but the day I fixed upon proved to be the day of his burial. I went to see him taken to his last resting-place, where he must lie till the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. After his death the people divided, and there are now four Baptist churches in Bacup. I had preached eighteen months at the time of his death, and have ministered often in and about Bacup, being well acquainted with most of the old people he left behind him. On September 16th, 1846, I planted a church there. The Lord grant that it may continue to be watered by the bedewing influences of the Holy Spirit, and increased with true disciples as a flock. A memoir of Mr. Hurst was published after his death by a Mr. Hargreaves.

It will be seen from the following narration that when I first heard of election I was upon old covenant ground. One Sunday evening I went with my father and my mother's brother to the Independent meeting in Rochdale to hear Mr. Roby, of Manchester. As we returned home, these two old pilgrims were wonderfully pleased with the sermon, saying that he had preached election very clearly and

strongly. Election was evidently the joy and rejoicing of their souls; sweeter to their taste than honey or the honeycomb. I wondered what this election could be that they were so delighted with. I could not at that time make free to ask what it meant; but the next day I went to the house of a cousin who had formerly lived with my father, and was a member of the Baptist church at Rochdale under the pastoral care of Mr. Littlewood, for the purpose of inquiring as to this important subject. When I got to his house he was just taking down his basket to go to the market, and I went with him. As we were walking towards the town, I said, "Last night you heard Mr. Roby." "Yes," he replied, "and a very good sermon he preached." "As we were going home," I then said, "your father and mine were well pleased that he had been, as they termed it, exceedingly strong and firm upon the doctrine of election, and I am come on purpose to ask you what this election means." He said, "Do you not recollect that in the New Testament you read of the elect; that no flesh shall be saved, 'but for the elect's sake?' 'And if it were possible, the false Christs and prophets would deceive the very elect?' 'And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?' 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;' 'That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;' 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace;' 'But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded;' 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God;' 'And God will send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other?'" "Yes," I said, "I have read all these texts many times; but I did not know what they meant, and I wish you would explain them." He answered, "The elect are God's people that he hath loved and chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and ordained them unto eternal life and salvation through Christ; and he has done this according to his good will and sovereign pleasure, as he has said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and compassion on whom I will have

compassion.' 'So then is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' Thus you see, it is those whom he has loved and chosen and ordained to eternal life that will be saved, and none else; as Paul says in Rom. xi. 7: 'But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.'" As I looked at the doctrine as thus laid down, I shall never forget the hatred and indignation that rose up in my carnal heart against it. I said within myself, "It is the most unjust, unreasonable doctrine that ever could be broached. I may read and pray, and go to the chapel and do all the good I can, and if I am not elected be lost after all. It does not even give a man a chance to be saved. I neither can nor will believe this election." Just as I was about to open my mouth against it, and utter with my lips the horrid feelings of my heart, this thought came into my mind: "There must be something in this election that I do not yet understand; for if there be two good men in this country, living to God and for another world, it is my father and my uncle, and they glory in it. Mr. Roby is a good minister of Jesus Christ, and highly esteemed, and he believes it, and preaches it too. I will saying nothing against it till I know more about the matter." Thus I was mercifully prevented from lifting up my voice against the God-glorifying, soul-humbling, and heart-enlarging doctrine of election.

There is no branch of divine truth left upon record, that has been so bitter and galling to my mind as God's election; yet I can truly say that there is no doctrine recorded in all the Bible that has been so sweet and blest to my soul. But more of this anon.

My cousin saw that I was much confounded and perplexed in my mind about it, and spoke very kindly to me, saying he was sorry I did not hear Mr. Gadsby the other day at Manchester, as he opened it up so clearly, and proved it from the Word of God that there were thousands of God's elect unborn, that lay in the loins of their ancestors, that must be brought into existence, called by grace, and landed safe in glory; and that when the Lord had gathered in the number of his elect, the world would be at an end. There appeared something so solemn in this statement that it rather tended to fill my mind with awe. He told me if I would go again to his house he would lend me a book

which would more fully and clearly explain these things, and he wished me to read it carefully over, and make it a matter of prayer to the Lord to guide and direct me into the truth. He moreover exhorted me in reading to have my Bible by me, and examine by it the proofs that the author brought forward. I had no rest in my spirit until the book was in my possession. It was "Elisha Coles on God's Sovereignty." I began to read, and prayed to be guided right, referring to the proofs in the Word of God, and such light shone into my mind that I was astonished. I saw that election shone like a sunbeam from Genesis to Revelation, and many were the hours that I spent in this manner. Like the noble Bereans, I searched the Scriptures daily, and found that election was the solemn truth of God, and can never be overthrown, either by men or devils. And one strong proof of its divine authenticity is, the carnal proud heart of fallen sinful man hates it, and fights against it, as mine did.

Finding that election was the truth of God, the question then with me was: "Am I one of them that the Lord hath loved with an everlasting and electing love, one that Christ has redeemed from amongst men by his blood?" I could not, however, find that evidence within me, that I was one God's chosen people, which my soul longed for. One night I went into the wood to pray that I might know my election of God. My mind was dark, hard, miserable, and wretched. I feared lest I should be a reprobate. My carnal wicked heart boiled with enmity and rebellion against God that ever he gave me a being; blasphemous thoughts against him were working in my mind as I was kneeling before him. I shuddered at what I felt, and as I went home that night the enmity of my carnal heart was so stirred up that I had even to lay my hand over my lips to keep these vile thoughts from breaking out in words. O how my spirit sank! I was ready to call myself a thousand bad names, that ever I should have such feelings against the God in whose hand my breath is, and against whom I have sinned and done evil in his sight, even as I could. Strange as this may appear, it was to teach me that God had neither loved nor chosen me because of my goodness, but for his great love wherewith he loved me, even when dead in trespasses and sins. The apostle Peter says, "Wherefore the rather,

brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." I was, however, led to see that if I could prove my effectual calling by grace, it was true evidence of my election. I was therefore led to look "unto the rock from whence I was hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence I was digged." I knew that it was not my own will nor power that had brought me out of the world of the ungodly, for instead of putting a helping hand to the work, I had long fought against him.

Another question arose in my mind, "Why was it that the Lord singled me out from the rest of my father's house, and from amongst my sinful companions?" It could not be because I was either better or more deserving than they, for I was one of the worst; but it was "the goodwill of him that dwelt in the bush" that I should be effectually called and formed for himself to show forth his praise. I was led to ask myself what obligation had I laid the Lord under to save me and have mercy upon me—what demand I had upon him for his mercy and favour. I felt in my inmost soul that I had no demand upon the Lord, that should the Lord mark my iniquities I could not stand before him. I knew that he had not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities, and that it was of his mercies that I was not consumed, and because his compassions fail not. Thus I found that he would be just and righteous in my condemnation. My mouth was stopped, and I could say with Dr. Watts:

> "Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
> I must pronounce thee just in death;
> And if my soul were sent to hell,
> Thy righteous law approves it well."

I felt that if I was saved it must be by grace, through faith, and that not of myself; it is the gift of God. "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Since this period the Lord has been graciously pleased at sundry times to shed his electing love abroad in my soul, as I shall state hereafter; and it has filled me with holy wonder that ever he should have thoughts of love and mercy toward such a vile wretch as myself. Many times, with sweet and solemn pleasure and tears of joy, have I united with the dear people of God at the Lord's supper in singing the following lines:

"While all our hearts and all our songs
Join to admire the feast,
Each of us cry, with thankful tongues,
Lord, why was I a guest?

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
While thousands made a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly forced us in,
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin."

For many years past, when we have had an addition to our number, I have given out the hymn that contains the above verses. When the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, says to the poor sinner, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," it draws him from sin to holiness; it enlarges his heart, and his feet run with a sweet and solemn pleasure in the way of his commandments. I am a witness for God that election made known to a poor sinner will never lead him to sin, but to love, honour, and obey the Lord in the precepts and exhortations of his word.

As it respects election not giving a man a chance to be saved, I have proved that had it been left to chance, as they call it, upon the ground of my own free will, I should have been lost for ever. My free will as a depraved sinner would have led me on in the broad and downward road that leads to destruction, and so would it have been with all Adam's fallen race. Not one soul would ever have been saved. It is the eternal purpose of God in our election, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, that inevitably secures the salvation of countless millions of Adam's fallen race: "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This scripture has with great propriety been called the golden chain of salvation, and is so firmly put together by our Triune Jehovah that one link of it can never be broken, either by men or devils, the world or sin, death or hell. Paul exults in this saying: "Nay, in all

these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 37, 38, 39.)

I was brought up amongst the sect calling themselves Independents, so that all my earliest attachments were to that people. The ordinance of baptism I was taught to believe was that of infant sprinkling. After my cousin, above mentioned, left my father's house, he began to attend the Baptist chapel at Rochdale, and I heard that he and some others were to be baptized by immersion. Moved by curiosity and attachment to my relative, I went to see the ordinance administered. I got there in good time, and had a seat where I could see the whole of what was attended unto. Mr. Littlewood preached upon the ordinance, proving that believers are the proper subjects, and that immersion was the scriptural mode of its administration. He was an able advocate for the doctrine, though what he said had not the least effect upon my mind in convincing me it was right. After sermon he left the pulpit, and a hymn was sung, during which time my mind was filled with anxiety. The minister and candidates for baptism came out of the vestry, and, standing by the water-side, the minister delivered a short address. They then, like Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, "and he baptized them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As I sat and looked on, my mind was greatly affected. I said within myself, "This is the baptism of the Bible." I thought of John baptizing at Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, and of Jesus being baptized by John in the river Jordan.

From this time I became a decided Baptist in principle, and nothing that I have ever heard or read against it since has in the least tended to move me from it, but rather to establish my mind in the truth of the doctrine. The arguments raised in support of infant sprinkling I conceive are founded upon supposition, drawn from circumstantial evidence, viz., supposing that there were infants in those households that were baptized in the apostolic age without having one "Thus saith the Lord" to build upon. A friend

put into my hand Wilson's "Scriptural Manual upon Baptism," which tended greatly to confirm and establish my mind in the truth of it. I know that it is of God, not only because the precept is so clearly revealed in the Scriptures, but from having proved it to be "the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," and also from having felt my Master's solemn and blessed presence with me so many times in the administration of it to others. In many instances I have seen the blessing of the Lord attending it to others of his people, who, like myself, were spectators. So let men, and even men of God and ministers of Jesus Christ, say what they may against it, none of these things move me. In writing this Memoir, it is not my province to write a defence of the ordinance. This has been done by far abler hands than mine, and in a way that can never be overthrown.

On one occasion, when in London, I had to baptize ten persons. A few days before the time I met an old Christian friend. As we shook hands he said, "I hear you are going to baptize before you leave town." I told him I was. "And are you going to baptize the dead or the living?" I looked at him, and for a moment was rather staggered at the question; but replied, "Sir, I trust I am going to baptize both the dead and the living; such as are dead to the law by the body of Christ and to all hope of salvation by works of righteousness done by them, having felt the truth of Paul's words: 'For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' They are such also as I trust are alive, being blest with a good and lively hope through grace of an interest in Christ, living a life of faith upon the Son of God, who hath loved them, and given himself for them." He exclaimed, "Go on, my friend, baptizing both the dead and the living, and the Lord has promised to be with you, and bless you." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) None have a scriptural right to be buried with Christ in baptism but such as are dead, for in nature none are to be buried but the dead. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

On another occasion, when examining a candidate for baptism who was giving "a reason of the hope that was in him with meekness and fear," he spoke of his desire to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and from love to Christ to

keep his commandments by bowing to the sceptre of King Jesus and being baptized in his name. I said, "Do you think you shall be any better when you have been baptized?" He replied, "Yes, I trust I shall, for it has been a long time upon my mind, and my conscience has accused me for the neglect. It is said to be 'the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;' and if I be baptized and enjoy this, I shall be better as regards my feelings than I have been for two or three years past." We were much pleased with the honesty and simplicity of this man's remarks.

Baptism sets forth the solemn, awful, and overwhelming sufferings of Him who said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." When in the garden of Gethsemane, he resisted unto blood, striving against sin, travelling in the greatness of his strength. In the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God due to the sins of his people, he stained all his raiment, so that he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The sprinkling of a few drops of water upon the face is a faint emblem of the overwhelming sufferings of Christ and the "fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." The immersion of the body in water is by far the most scriptural, strong, and striking emblem of the sufferings of Him of whom the poet so sweetly and solemnly sings:

> "Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, thine,
> And bathed in its own blood,
> While all exposed to wrath divine
> The glorious sufferer stood."

It is a great mercy to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, as set forth in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, being made conformable unto his death.

I never felt any spiritual union of soul to the minister and people of Hall Fold Chapel. They were in those days a very formal body of worshippers. Their conversation was mostly upon worldly subjects, which did not suit me. As the Lord, I trust, was powerfully working in my soul by his Holy Spirit, I wanted to hear something of the gracious dealings of the Lord with his people, and the marks and

evidences of those that were born again, of the inward conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, of the fears and temptations that were peculiar to "poor worm Jacob" and the "men of Israel," and of the mournings, hungerings, and thirstings of the poor in spirit. (Matt. v. 3—10.) My soul was in earnest, so that the form of religion would not do for me. I wanted the life and power of it, and not to be a Christian in name only, but in deed and of a truth. However, I trust there were a few of the Lord's hidden ones amongst them, and that my father was one.

Amongst the few poor people who at that time met in the Independent room at Rochdale, there were some to whom I felt my soul cleave in the bonds of the gospel, so that the remembrance of them is sweet. In a year or two the hearers began to decrease, and the room was given up. Service, in consequence, was for a time discontinued, until Providence Chapel was bought by the Independent body, principally through the influence of Mr. Roby, who re-opened it. Mr. Threlkald, minister of the Presbyterian chapel, Blackwater Street, died about this time, and Dr. Barnes, of Manchester, came to preach his funeral sermon. My father consented that I should go and hear him; but though a man of great learning and talent, his preaching had nothing in it that I could understand. After service was over a neighbour of mine said, "He had left his umbrella in the vestry of the Baptist chapel, and if I would go with him for it, we might return home together." We found some of the friends in the vestry engaged in religious conversation, and I heard them speak of the gracious dealings of the Lord with the souls of his people. From what I saw and heard, my soul cleaved to them, like the soul of Ruth to Naomi, when she said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." (Ruth i. 16, 17.) Death has for a season parted me and these dear people. One of them, who was at that time a deacon of the Baptist church, was afterwards one of my deacons for more than twenty years. He lived to the age of eighty-eight years, and was enabled to fill up his

place until his death. The circumstances of his becoming connected with us will subsequently be recorded. "The memory of the just is blessed." This dear man of God's name and memory are sweet to me, with many others.

From this time I could not feel comfortable nor rest among the people at Hall Fold. I now began to meet with the Baptists at Rochdale, and found that the ministry of Mr. Littlewood was far more spiritual and experimental than what I had been accustomed to hear. He sometimes described the feelings and exercises of my mind, and spoke very encouragingly to "the poor in spirit," "the mourners in Zion," the "hungerers and thirsters after Christ and conformity to his image." My soul from time to time was built up and edified, of the which I have a sweet remembrance to this day. The more I became acquainted with the people, the more my heart and soul were united to them in the bonds of the everlasting gospel.

These things brought on a very great trial to my soul; for when Sunday morning came I was anxious to attend among the Baptists, and my father was desirous that I should go with him. It often happened that on a Lord's day morning a very painful contention arose between us. When he compelled me to go with him in the morning, as I found no food or comfort there, I at times left Hall Fold at noon and went to Rochdale, although I had more than three miles to walk. Amongst my new friends my soul was in its right element. My dear father felt it sorely, and often said, "Some of my family that are grown up will neither go with me nor to any other place of worship; and now you, who have given me so much trouble, and should be a comfort to me in my old age, want to attend somewhere else, and I am left to go alone." I felt for him, but told him if I went to Hall Fold my heart would be at Rochdale, for my treasure was there; and the Master says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." At length, seeing this was the case, he never forbade my going. I was thenceforth at liberty to worship the Lord according to the dictates of my own conscience. So attached was I to the minister and people attending the Baptist chapel that I went one day upon a hill opposite, called Sparrow Hill, and surveyed the building and burial-ground with great affection, and said in my heart, "That is the place I

intend to worship in as long as I live, and there, too, I hope to be buried." How true is the word of the Lord, as will evidently appear from what follows, where he hath said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways, saith the Lord."

MR. GADSBY'S FIRST VISIT TO ROCHDALE.

A CONTENTION broke out amongst the members of the church, which caused a division. I will narrate the cause as truly and impartially as I can. A good and gracious man named William Robinson, who lived in what is called the edge of Saddleworth, an old member of the church, and highly esteemed both by the minister and the people, one Lord's day called one of the members on one side of the chapel-yard, and said to him, "I have an old friend at Manchester, a member with Mr. Roby, who wrote to me a little while ago, and said there is a good and gracious man of God come to the Baptist chapel in St. George's Road in that town, by the name of Gadsby, and that he had heard him with great profit, and wished me to go over, and he would go with me to hear him. I went last Lord's day; and really I must say he is the best preacher I ever heard in my life. I was never so blest in my soul under any minister before. He does not preach a new gospel; it is the old gospel, brought forward in a way so blessedly calculated to meet the cases of the Lord's tried family that I would have you to go and hear him for yourself." (This is the first link in the chain, leading to the establishment of the cause of God and truth at Hope Chapel, as will appear from what follows.) The person he addressed accordingly went the following Lord's day, and was so blest under the word that he also brought a good report of Mr. Gadsby and his preaching. He repeated his visits to Manchester, and others went along with him. One Lord's day, in the vestry, many more said they intended to go the following Sabbath. One of the deacons (the same that I have above mentioned) not liking that so many should absent themselves, and having a desire to hear Mr. Gadsby himself, requested that they should tarry at home, and he would ask their minister to allow Mr. Gadsby to come as a supply, when their minister was away. "We can then," he said, "all hear him without leaving our own

place of worship." This proposal was gladly accepted by the friends, and the minister being in his vestry, the deacon went for the purpose of making the request. To his great surprise, however, the minister angrily refused, saying, "Mr. Gadsby is an Antinomian, and an enemy to the cross of Christ; and he shall never set his feet in my pulpit." Much disappointed and grieved, the deacon returned to his friends, telling them the result. They were also much surprised, and manifested great dissatisfaction at what they considered "an improper and arbitrary spirit" in refusing their request. This denial caused many more to go to Manchester than otherwise would have done; and immediately afterwards they invited Mr. G. to come to Rochdale, and preach at a friend's house, whose heart was open to receive him. He consented, and in the month of May, 1807, he preached his first sermon in this neighbourhood, on a Monday, at a place called Cassion Gate, near to where Hope Chapel now stands. The preaching was intended to have been in a farmhouse, but neither the house nor barn would contain the people, and he was obliged to preach in a meadow behind the barn. The services began at half-past two and half-past six. The text was, for both sermons, James i. 25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." This was the first time I ever saw Mr. Gadsby, and was struck with the attention that was paid to the preaching of the word.

When the afternoon service was over, many of the friends crowded round an old man of God, called James Law, who was one of the oldest members of a Christian church in the neighbourhood, having been bending his steps Zionwards more than half a century, asking him what he thought of the sermon. He replied, "I never heard a sermon I liked better. These are the precious truths of God that I must live and die by;" and, putting his walking-stick under his arm, and his hand into his pocket, he said to the friends, "This is one of the Lord's sent servants, and he must not go a warfare at his own charges. A subscription must be made to bear his expenses, and I must give my mite. I am old and infirm, and, having a considerable distance to go, I am sorry I cannot stop for the evening service."

There were many more people in the evening than in the afternoon, and all the aged, living family of God appeared much comforted and delighted.

The concluding hymn in the evening was the 106th, First Book, Dr. Watts:

"Shall we go on to sin?" &c.

This hymn evidently appeared to be sung by the large congregation with melody in their hearts. I have not to this day forgotten the earnest, fervent manner in which Mr. Gadsby lined out the following lines:

"Forbid it, mighty God,
Nor let it e'er be said
That we whose sins are crucified
Should raise them from the dead."

Thanks to the Lord, who at that time so indelibly impressed the precious lines upon my heart, and has by his grace enabled me to obey them. I was but a lad at this time, looking on, little thinking that these things would lead to the establishment of a church over which I was to preside so many years as the pastor.

From this time, Mr. Gadsby commenced preaching at Rochdale once a month, on a Monday night, and continued to do so for more than twenty years. The number of his friends gradually increased, which caused Mr. Littlewood great dissatisfaction, many of his people going to hear the man he had called an Antinomian, and encouraging him in his work. This led him to consult his old friend, Mr. Hurst, on this important affair, and he advised him by no means to exclude those of his people who wished to hear Mr. Gadsby, but to preach better, and his hearers would have less occasion to leave him and run after others.

Whilst these things were working, a minister of the name of Winterbottom came to Rochdale, who advised Mr. Littlewood to cut off every member of his church that encouraged Mr. Gadsby, even if he had not a dozen left; "for," said he, "they are gospel hornets." This inflamed Mr. Littlewood's mind. He called his church immediately together, and stated to them that he had come to the determination that "all those members of his church who would not promise to desist from encouraging Mr. Gadsby's coming to Rochdale, either by their presence or purse, should no longer be members of his church; for if they were, he

would no longer be the pastor." He seemed resolved on putting this resolution into force that night, which troubled the minds of the friends exceedingly. The deacon above named, seeing the untoward aspect of affairs, and the great breach which was likely to be made, said the case was one of vast importance, and if the minister was determined to abide by what he had said, he ought to give the people time to reflect upon it, and not enforce his determination that night. He therefore moved, "That this unhappy business should lie over until the next regular church meeting." This motion was agreed to, and great anxiety prevailed as to the result. Many prayers were doubtless offered up to the great Head of the church for guidance and direction. The day of trial came, and nine members were found who could not, as a matter of conscience in the sight of the Lord, promise that they would desist from hearing and supporting Mr. Gadsby. These, in accordance with the minister's resolution, were separated from the church.

It was a great trial to them all; for they loved their minister and the people, and were much attached to the place, some of them having attended there from childhood. Several of the members who could not hold up their hands for this separation followed shortly afterwards, and united with those who were excluded. Others also were so hurt in their minds, though they did not leave the place, they never sat down at the Lord's table afterwards. This was a heartrending affair to many; but, like the contention that arose between Paul and Barnabas, though Paul went one way and Barnabas another, wherever they went they preached Christ Jesus, and him crucified, the Lord working with them, confirming the word with signs following; so that these things which happened unto them turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, Zion's cords were lengthened, and her stakes strengthened. And so it was in this case. The nine persons who were separated with their friends began to meet together for worship, first in a farm-house at Cassion Gate, and afterwards in a school-room in Drake Street, where they continued to meet until Hope Chapel was built.

Paul and Barnabas were good and gracious men and ministers of Jesus Christ, and so were, doubtless, Mr. Littlewood and Mr. Gadsby. I have heard the former state his call

to the work of the ministry, and none that I have known have entered the work more disinterestedly with regard to pecuniary sacrifices, for the honour and glory of the Lord in the salvation of his people, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, the wealth and honours of the mercantile world in which he was engaged. He had many seals to his ministry, whose walk and conversation showed that they were the people of God. He was thirty-three years in the town, an ornament to that gospel which he preached to others. His kindness and liberality to the Lord's poor were unbounded. He lived long enough to prove that Mr. Gadsby was no enemy to the cross of Christ, but one of the greatest champions in his day for the honour and glory of the Redeemer's Person and a finished salvation so blessedly adapted to meet the case of a poor lost sinner. He also adorned the doctrine he preached by a conduct and conversation becoming the gospel, as much as any man in the land. The chief difference between these good men was, the former held the Moral Law as the believer's rule of life, and the latter the precepts, commandments, and exhortations of the Gospel, given by Christ, as King in Zion, contained in the New Testament.

The last Lord's day that Mr. Littlewood spent in his Master's service, he had but few people to hear him in the morning. This so discouraged him that when he went into the vestry he told the friends that were in the vestry that he had not seen so few people in the chapel for a long time, and he was afraid they were forsaking him in his old age. One of them replied, "Sir, do not be discouraged. It is not so; but Mr. Gadsby is at Hope Chapel to-day, and many of our people are gone to hear him." This was a great relief to his mind, and he sent his son up to my house to invite Mr. Gadsby to go and take breakfast with him next morning. Mr. G. accepted the invitation; but, ere he arose, the friend at whose house he slept knocked at his bedroom door, and told him Mr. Littlewood was dead. He did not go to breakfast, but before he left the town called to condole with the bereaved family. I have no doubt that if Mr. Littlewood had lived a few years longer, Mr. Gadsby and he would have become more intimately acquainted, which would have been a comfort to themselves and many others.

MY SOUL SET AT LIBERTY.

LEAVING for a time the historical part of my narrative, I return to the more immediate dealings of the Lord with my soul. In a former part of my memoir I have stated how I was led to see the way of salvation by Christ Jesus under the ministry of Mr. Hurst; and the question with me was, "Is he *my* Saviour and Redeemer?" Feeling so much hardness of heart, coldness, deadness, and barrenness of soul, darkness of mind, and the workings of sin within, I often said, "If it be so, why am I thus? Why this dull and lifeless frame?" fears and temptations crowding in upon me, the enemy telling me the good work of grace had never been begun in my soul, that I had never repented right, and that my prayers were so poor and half-hearted, such wanderings of affection when on my knees, I could not be a child of God, nor a friend of him I attempted to worship.

In this state of mind I went one Sunday evening to a prayer-meeting. One of the friends took a new hymn book out of his pocket, which he called "Rippon's Selection." It was a book I was entirely unacquainted with, being always accustomed to Dr. Watts's psalms and hymns. He gave out that hymn of dear John Newton's:

"'Tis a point I long to know," &c.

He read the hymn through. I stood and listened with the deepest attention; every word of it had a place in my heart and soul. It was such an opening up of the feelings and exercises of my mind which, if my salvation had depended upon it, I could not have described so well. This was a great help and encouragement, knowing that others of the Lord's family had travelled in the same path before me, and that I was in the footsteps of the flock; and that "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." My regard for this hymn, and that of Cowper's:

"The Lord will happiness divine
On contrite hearts bestow.
Then tell me, gracious Lord, is mine
A contrite heart or no?"

is such that I hope never to forget them, and the benefit I have derived from them, as long as I live. I have great union of soul to all who labour under the same feeling and

exercises of mind; but I can feel no union of spirit to those who can pour contempt upon such hymns, and say "they ought never to be printed." I knew a minister of the above description who said "he never had a doubt or fear of his interest in Christ for twenty years;" but his end, alas! proved that he had mistaken a presumptuous confidence for a tender conscience and the fear of the Lord. "For as the body without the soul is dead, so faith without works is dead also." With all such professors I wish to have no intercourse. "Poor worm Jacob and the men of Israel," Christ's "little flock," who knew what Paul meant when he said, "Without are fightings, and within are fears," I would choose for my companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

My heart was so hard and obdurate that I could only repent as the Lord gave me the grace of repentance, blessed me with a broken and contrite spirit, and laid me low at Jesus's feet. I felt too that I could only believe savingly and feelingly as the Lord gave me faith, and I proved experimentally that true saving faith which brings peace, joy, and rest into the soul is not of ourselves; "it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Hearing Mr. Gadsby, in one of his monthly visits to Rochdale, describe the marks and evidences of a heaven-born and Spirit-taught child of God, helped me much. The Saviour said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The truly converted soul becomes like the newborn babe spoken of in Ezek. xvi.: "But thou wast cast out into the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born." In this newborn babe I saw an emblem of myself. It was cast out into the open field; so was I cast out from all my former connections and sinful ways. It was weak and helpless; it could neither wash, nor clothe, nor feed, nor guard, nor protect, nor defend itself. All that it could do was to cry and bewail its indigent, pitiable state. Its very crying was a token of life. And so it was with me, for I went on sighing and crying to the Lord. I saw and felt that I was polluted with sin, and stood in need of being washed in the blood of the Lamb, that I was naked, and stood in need of the robe of right-

eousness, and to be clothed with the garments of salvation. As a new-born babe desires the breast of its mother, so did I desire the sincere milk of the word. Oh the many hours that I spent in reading the word of God! I stood in need of being guarded, protected, and defended from the curse and condemnation of the law, the assaults and fiery darts of the devil, the pleasures and allurements of this vain and sinful world. I saw that the Lord did all for this poor helpless infant it stood in need of, and I felt he must do all for me; for without him I could do nothing but add sin to sin, and sink myself deeper and deeper in the horrible pit and miry clay. I had a confidence wrought in me by the blessed Spirit that Christ was able to do all these things for me; and indeed I entreated his blessed Majesty that I might be saved by him, washed in his blood, and clothed in his righteousness. Nothing could satisfy my poor longing soul short of knowing that I had "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Though I did not receive the blessing of pardon as soon as I wished it, I was sometimes "helped with a little help" by the way, with a little softening of spirit, a sweet savour in longing and thirsting after the Lord, and sometimes a little encouraged under the ministry of the word. At other times I was greatly discouraged, tempted to believe that I prayed in vain; that though I sought the blessing it would for ever be denied. Unbelief put up its head, and told me the Lord says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" yet you have been asking, seeking, and knocking for many months, and you have not found the blessing, that peace and pardon your soul longs for. The promise cannot be true, or you have not sought it in the right way. Rebellion began to work in my heart, and the enemy said, "Pray no more; it is all in vain." My spirit sank. I staggered in my mind like a drunken man, and was at my wits' end. The things that I had to contend with, both from within and without, made me so miserable that I was weary of my life, shut up as in a prison, bound in affliction and iron; under the preached word miserable and wretched, in the company of the people of God agitated; as David said, my soul "refused to be comforted." Those around me could see in my countenance that I was in a very

low and distressed state, and were afraid of me committing the horrid crime of suicide, watching me in order to prevent it. I was sorely put to it for some time, such thoughts haunting me that I cannot find words to express the misery and bitterness of soul I felt.

One Lord's day, in this state of mind, I went to the house of God. The people all appeared happy and comfortable; the minister preached the truth, but it had no effect upon my mind, only to make me more miserable. Like the poor prisoner who through a grate "sees others walk at large," so it increased my misery and distress. After morning service I followed the people to the house, where some of them dined. They all appeared cheerful and happy in their souls, whilst my mind was torn to pieces with sin, guilt, fears, and temptations. I could not stay among them. The enemy said, "Dost thou not see how happy and comfortable these people are? They are the people of God, enjoying the blesed presence of the Lord, but thou art a castaway, a reprobate. Thy prayers are all in vain. It is of no use thy appearing amongst them. Thou art but a deceiver. Put an end to thy miserable existence, and try the worst of it." With these feelings I left the house and went to the town bridge, where I stood for a few minutes, my mind greatly confused. I, however, rambled on towards the wood, through which the river ran, and where there was more depth of water. I entered the wood, when these thoughts rushed into my mind: "It is a solemn and awful thing to go out of time into eternity. I will try to pray." I climbed up into the wood and leaned on a fence, trying to pour out my soul to the Lord, but could not, I felt so shut up and rebellious. I came down towards the spot whence I previously thought of jumping into the water; but when I got to the brink I stood trembling before the Lord. Turning round to look if there was anyone in sight, I saw a large tree higher up in the wood, and the thought came across me that I would go and kneel down behind it. I had not kneeled under the fence, and fancied that if my knees were bent to the earth the Lord might peradventure hear me. I went and fell down before him, and he was graciously pleased to break into my soul. My hard stubborn heart began to soften, and my darkness to flee away, and I was blest with a contrite and humble spirit whilst confessing my

sins before him, and had nearness of access in pleading with him for mercy on such a rebellious wretch. I thanked him for keeping me in the hour of temptation, beseeching him that he would never leave nor forsake me, but guide and direct me in all my ways.

How long I was in this frame of spirit, confessing my sins and pleading with the Lord, I cannot tell; for when the Lord appears time goes on swiftly and sweetly. The first thing that called my mind from this delightful communion was a man standing near the water, looking up into the wood, who called out, "A Methodist, a Methodist, praying behind the tree!" I made no reply to his taunts, but returned to the town, thanking the Lord that my soul had escaped as a bird out of the hand of the fowler, for the snare was broken and I had escaped.

This kind interposition of the Lord was very seasonable, because much needed; yet not that deliverance from guilt and condemnation my soul longed for. The temptation, however, did not return with the same force, but the joy I then felt soon declined, and my soul sank lower than ever. Oh the sighs and groans, with strong crying and tears! The agonies my poor soul has endured I cannot fully describe. I did not want company, but wandered alone, pondering things over in my poor soul. There was nothing that I could lay hold of to bring comfort and rest into my wearied mind. Looking to Mount Sinai and the Law of Ten Commandments made me tremble. If I looked to my past life, I was ashamed and confounded. If I looked within, I could find no good thing. The buffetings of Satan, a conscience laden with guilt, bowed me down greatly. These were my constant companions. I would fain have got rid of these feelings, but I could not. Like David, "I roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." To tell me that it was in my power to act spiritual faith and relieve myself from the burden, tended only to increase my misery. I could say, as John Newton sings:—

> "O could I but believe,
> Then all would easy be;
> I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve:
> My help must come from thee."

If David could have delivered his own soul, he would not have needed to cry so earnestly, "O Lord, I beseech thee,

deliver my soul." Whoever they are that can believe when they please, their faith stands in their own wisdom and power, and not in the wisdom and power of God, and, consequently, is not the faith of God's elect, but of the stony ground hearers, who have not the root of the matter in them; who for a while believe, and appear to receive the Word with joy, but in time of temptation fall away. The Lord's living family "are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul," being kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. That faith which has not Jesus Christ for its author and finisher will never stand the test, bear the soul up in the swellings of Jordan, nor land it safe in glory.

The nearer my deliverance approached, the greater was the burden and distress of my soul; and so it was with the children of Israel before God brought them out of Egyptian bondage, and they were never to forget the memorable night of their deliverance.

I hope never to forget the night the Lord brought my soul out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the gospel. It was on a Lord's day evening. I went in the morning to the house of God in a very distressed state of mind, and remained so all day. The preaching only tended to increase my misery, the enemy telling me that, like Simon Magus, I had neither part nor lot in the matter. Having attended three services, I was returning home (it was a fine summer evening), in my feelings worse than when I set out in the morning. So sinful, miserable, and wretched did I feel myself that I was ready to give all up for lost, the accuser of the brethren harassing me with his temptations, saying it was of no use going any more either to chapel or prayer-meetings. It was folly and presumption to read and pray, for the more I attended to these things the more wretched I grew. My soul gave way under these temptations, and I said within myself, "I will give all my religion up, for it is nothing but a stench in my own nostrils. What must it be then to the Lord of Hosts?" So engaged was my mind that I stood still in the road, when this question arose within me: "What am I to do? Go back into the world I cannot. I have tried again and again to do this, and found their society more and more distasteful." I then concluded that I would have nothing to do either with the world or the people of

God, but be a kind of go-between, or as the sparrow alone upon the house-top, moping and solitary as a dove or the crane in the wilderness, and try to make myself as easy as possible in my present outcast condition; but, alas! there is no comfort for a guilty sinner in such a state of mind.

Whilst pondering on these things, the following words came with such power upon my mind, as though I had heard them spoken by an audible voice: "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" I was so struck with their import that I stood amazed, saying to myself, "These are the words of St. Paul in the seventh chapter to the Romans. He was a good and a gracious man, a minister of Jesus Christ, and the great apostle of the Gentiles. If he had thus to complain of sin and wretchedness, who can tell but I may be a child of God after all my fears and temptations?" The latter part of the chapter flowed into my mind like a river. I could truly say, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." My soul was greatly encouraged. I found I was a brother and companion with Paul in this path of internal tribulation and Christian experience. I hastened home to get my Bible, in order to examine the chapter through. I read it with such light, power, and comfort as I had never felt before; so pleased and blest in my soul that I began to read the next chapter, commencing thus: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." As I read these precious words, their blessed contents were brought into my soul with power and glory. I saw and felt that I was in Christ Jesus, saved with an everlasting salvation. The burden of sin was removed, my conscience cleansed by an application of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I felt the sealing testimony of the Holy Spirit of God that I stood complete and accepted in the Beloved. I read the chapter through with a joy I cannot describe. I now knew my election of God, and that no charge could ever be brought against me, because Christ had died for my sins, and was raised again from the dead for my justification;

that he ever lived to make intercession for me, and would receive me into his kingdom of glory. The love of Christ was shed abroad in my heart; I saw and felt that nothing could separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. How precious and glorious were the truths contained in this chapter to my soul on that memorable evening; and often, in reading and preaching, when I have cited portions of it, I have felt a little of the same sweetness and savour. Thanking the Lord for the great deliverance he had wrought for me and in me with the joy of salvation in my soul, I retired for the night, but so ravished was I with the beauty and glory of Christ as my Saviour and Redeemer that sleep departed from me. Many restless nights had I previously endured with a guilty conscience, a broken law, an evil heart, a tempting devil, crowds of doubts and fears and carnal reasonings; but all had now departed. The year of jubilee was come, the prisoner was brought out of the dungeon into the banqueting-house, and the banner over him was love. I well remember this question passing across my mind: "Where are all my sins, that have so long been a burden and plague to my soul?" I saw by faith that a precious Christ had put them all away by the sacrifice of himself, and made an end of sin; as it is written: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; and I will pardon whom I reserve." (Jer. l. 20.) My sins had appeared as scarlet and crimson, but were all washed away in the blood of atonement. As I stood in Christ, I was as white as snow or as wool. Such was the joy of my heart in the dead of the night, the family asleep around me, that I sang in my soul-feelings:

"See, here an endless ocean flows
Of never-failing grace!
Behold, a dying Saviour's veins
The sacred flood increase.

"It rises high, and drowns the hills,
Has neither shore nor bound;
Now, if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can *ne'er* be found.

"Awake, our hearts, adore the grace," &c.

Bless the Lord, this song has been sweet and precious to

my soul many times since the memorable night of my deliverance, and I hope will be until I join the everlasting song, "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." All my doubts and fears were now removed by that perfect love which casteth out fear. I felt assured that the good work of grace was begun in my soul, and, with Paul, had a confidence "that he which had begun it would carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus." No fears of my sins standing against me, nor of the curse of the law, nor of death or hell. I saw that all my foes were vanquished. My soul could now joyfully sing, "Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." These were the things I had long been praying for; and I now proved to the joy of my heart that there is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

I lived in the sweet enjoyment of the liberty of the gospel for many months. The word of the Lord was more precious to me than gold; yea, than much fine gold. I saw the declarative glory of the Lord shine forth in the sacred pages, which were once as a sealed book unto me. My delight was in the word of the Lord, and in his law did I meditate day and night. My soul took delight in approaching to God, as my covenant God and Father in Christ. Christ and his finished salvation, all of grace, was the joy of my heart and the boast of my song. The Holy Spirit was in my soul as a Spirit of praise and thanksgiving, constraining me to say with David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

MY BAPTISM—THE CHURCH AT ROCHDALE PLANTED.

HAVING the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart, and as one of his sheep, I heard his voice saying unto me, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." I had been a Baptist

in principle from the first time I saw it administered, as mentioned in a former part of my narrative. I now felt it to be my duty and privilege to follow my Lord and Master in that solemn ordinance. The nine persons who were separated from the church in Town Meadows, under the pastoral care of Mr. Littlewood, as previously stated, agreed to be formed into a church. As my heart and soul were more united to them and Mr. Gadsby than to Mr. Littlewood and the people who remained with him, though I loved them much, and felt it a trial to leave them and the place where I had thought to have been buried, I resolved to join their little community. They were my most intimate companions. I attended their meetings, to consult what steps we should take, there being several individuals who had not been baptized who wished to unite with them. A special meeting, therefore, was appointed to hear their experience. The Lord laid it upon my mind that I must attend. I had much exercise of soul respecting this affair. My father was rather against it; not that he was opposed to the ordinance itself, but in consequence of my youth. Not being yet seventeen, he had his fears lest I should be drawn aside by sinful lusts and pleasures, and he wished me to defer it until I was older. What he said had its due effect, knowing in some measure my own weakness, and that I had fallen into sin before; so that I was much cast down at times when I thought of being baptized and joining the church. I saw it was according to God's word, and I knew the Lord had done great things for my soul, whereof I was glad. I loved him too, and had it in my heart to honour and obey him by bowing to his sceptre in attending to the ordinances of his house.

The day came when the experiences of those who wished to join should be heard, and such were the feelings of my soul that I could not keep away. Before going I went into a barn to pray that the Lord would go with me, and if it was his blessed will that I should join his church and people, he would be with me to keep and preserve me from evil, so that I might not bring a reproach upon his cause, which he knew lay nearer my heart than either father or mother, or even my own life.

I found the friends assembled. The meeting commenced with singing and prayer to the great Head of the church

for his blessing to attend us as a people uniting together in church fellowship. Along with the rest who were to be baptized, I gave a reason of the hope that was in me with meekness and fear, but had not that liberty which I expected in declaring what the Lord had done for my soul. The friends agreed to receive us, but said that Mr. Gadsby, who was to administer the ordinance, wished to hear us relate the dealings of God with our souls. We should, therefore, have to meet him at a certain time appointed for that purpose. I trembled at the thought of having to be examined by so excellent a man. When the time came, he brought a minister with him from London, who also wished to hear what we had to say. My turn came. Like Ephraim, I began to speak tremblingly; but the Lord was graciously pleased to shine into my soul and upon the path wherein he had led me, so that I had sweet liberty and enlargedness of heart in declaring the things which the Lord had taught me. When I had finished Mr. Gadsby asked me several questions upon the doctrines of grace, and my views respecting the ordinances of God's house, baptism, and the Lord's supper. I well remember the last question, which was this: "John, you are very young, and you will be exposed to many snares and temptations. Do you think you can stand your ground, and not bring a reproach upon yourself and the cause of God and truth?" I replied, "Yes, the Lord keeping and preserving me; as Paul said, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'" He smiled, and said to his London friend, "Have you anything to ask this lad?" He replied, "No; there is everything in him that can be desired. I am well satisfied that the good work of grace is begun in his soul."

The 24th of May, 1809, being Wednesday in Whit-week, was the appointed day for baptizing and planting the church. As we had neither chapel nor baptistry, the question arose as to where the ordinance was to be administered. One of the friends, a farmer, said, "He had a small stream of water running through one of his fields, which could be made use of for that purpose." This was agreed to. When the day came, nearly 2,000 people were assembled. Professor and profane were gathered together to witness the ordinance of baptism by immersion. Mr. Gadsby stood on the bank

of a reservoir, which served as a kind of gallery where many sat, the great body of the people being before him in the field. He preached from John v. 39: "Search the Scriptures," &c. At this time he was about thirty-six years of age, and such was the power of his voice that the sound of it was heard nearly a mile off, but not to distinguish the words. After sermon he baptized six persons. In an hour after we met together in the farm-house, were formed into a church, and partook of the Lord's supper. This was similar to the apostolic custom, when the churches met in private houses for breaking of bread and prayer.

I have a sweet and solemn remembrance of the day when fifteen souls were thus united together. They have all long been gone but myself. Many have been the changes I have seen since that day. But, having obtained help of God, I am still continued. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for he has wrought wonders amongst us. Three churches have sprung from us. In each case I have organized them, by the mutual consent of our church, it being done for the furtherance of the gospel, that Zion's cords might be lengthened and her stakes strengthened. We have also had removed by death at this time (1866) 170 members, many of whom have left a blessed testimony behind them that they died in the Lord, and about the same number remain as members.

After I was baptized I had a flood of persecution to wade through; even my own relatives did not like the idea of my joining the "sect everywhere spoken against." If I went out on matters of business, my being "dipped," as they called it, was thrown in my face by way of derision, so that I proved the truth of these words: "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." I was, however, enabled to rejoice and be exceeding glad, knowing that "so persecuted they the prophets."

Before the formation of the church, we had met on a Lord's day for some months in a school-room, where we had regular preaching, John Warburton being our principal supply; and we had to enter into a weekly subscription to support his coming amongst us to labour in word and doctrine. When I left Hall Fold Chapel, and was determined to go amongst the Baptists, my father was so grieved that he would not allow me anything for my Sunday dinner,

so that I was forced to go without, having no friend's house to go to. I used to ramble about until one o'clock, and then went to the Methodist chapel, service at which in those days commenced at that time. At length, however, when my father saw that I was determined not to go with him, he agreed to allow me threepence per week for my Sunday dinner. Some of the people from the country, whose conversation I much valued, went to a place during the intermission where each had to pay threepence. For the benefit of their company, I went too, and by so doing I was still deprived of food for the body. Some time afterwards my father allowed me sixpence, which gave me great pleasure, as I could give threepence per week towards the subscription for the minister, which still left me without dinner. Many times have I left home on a Lord's day morning and never tasted any food for the body until I returned about nine or ten o'clock at night. I never told my friends the state I was in, for the preached word at times was exceedingly precious to my soul; so I did not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. No thanks to me that I was enabled to bear these privations, for had the Lord left me to myself and my sinful inclinations, instead of pinching my appetite to support the cause of God and truth, I should have been wallowing in sin, and doing my poor body much more harm than occasionally going without a dinner. My soul says, "Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory." For "by the grace of God I am what I am."

MR. WARBURTON SETTLED AT ROCHDALE.

Directly after the formation of the church, we gave Mr. Warburton a call to become our pastor, and in November of the same year he accepted it, and was dismissed from the church at Manchester, where he was a member, in order that he might come. The Lord greatly blessed his labours. Several of the members from the other church followed us, and from time to time we had additions by baptism, and there was a great ingathering of people from all quarters; so that our school-room, large as it was, soon became too small to hold the people. Then a new chapel was talked of, and meetings were held to consult upon the

propriety of building one. Subscriptions were entered into, land was taken, and the foundation laid in 1810. The hand of the Lord was with us, as will be seen from what Mr. Warburton says upon it in his "Mercies of a Covenant God," page 99; for he opened the hearts of people far and near to communicate towards the raising up of Hope Chapel, which we called it; for we said it was begun in hope, carried on in hope, and in hope, too, which will never make ashamed. So we called it "Hope Chapel." It was opened in Whit-week the following year, when Mr. Gadsby preached a most blessed sermon from Isa. lx. 7: "I will glorify the house of my glory." The chapel was built at a time when materials, especially wood, were very dear. The person who superintended the building in a while became offended because he must not have all his own way, and the builder and he were leagued together to oppress us. The chapel and minister's house adjoining, which it was calculated would not cost more than £1,000 or £1,100, altogether before they were properly finished cost several hundreds more.

When the house was built, our minister came to reside there, and brought with him a large family; so we were soon brought into great trouble. A dark time came on, trade was bad, provisions rose in price, and he, in consequence, required more support than we were able to find, having a heavy chapel debt and ground-rent upon our shoulders. I have been at many church meetings when the poor members, some of whom could not make both ends meet at home, have been pressed for money which they really could not afford to give.

The distress I saw the Lord's poor saints brought into in those days had a very good effect upon my mind. Ever since I have been the pastor of this church, and have presided over it, I have thought it prudent to keep money matters from being brought forward at church meetings as much as possible. As a proof of this, I have now been the pastor for nearly half a century, during which time my salary has only been mentioned at three church meetings. The only contention (if so it may be called) we have had on this subject has been from the people saying my salary was too small, and offering me more, which I have refused to take, being determined, in the strength and fear of the Lord, to obey the exhortation given to Christian ministers

in 1 Tim. iii. 3: "Not greedy of filthy lucre." Many have been the prayers that I have put up that I might be enabled to say with a good conscience, like Paul, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel;" there are so many "greedy dogs" in the ministry who "can never have enough," not only in the Church of England but among Dissenters, who give too much proof that they are more for the fleece than the flock. (Isa. lvi. 10, 11.) Such conduct wounds the minds of godly people, and is greatly calculated to increase ungodliness and infidelity in the land.

While I thus speak, I feel very much for a man of God in the ministry who has a large family, a poor people, and a heavy chapel debt. Such have many errands to a throne of grace, and much work for faith and patience. The Lord will stand by them, as he did by his servant John Warburton, and make a way for them in the wilderness, both in providence and grace. Their enemies, too, shall be clothed with shame, who watch for their halting. Thus when we were in our great difficulties, and could not see our way, the Lord opened the way; as it is written: "The valley of Achor for a door of hope."

About this time the Lord brought a dear man of God amongst us, of the name of Thomas Niven, a North Briton, who soon saw the difficulties we had to contend with; and, being a man of property, he took the temporal affairs of the place into his own hands for a time, until things could come round a little; he received from the deacons what the pews and other collections made, making up the deficiency from his own pocket. He took the minister his salary every Friday, paying interest, ground-rent, and other matters that came against us. This was a great deliverance for us, and a sore mortification to our enemies. They did all they could to prejudice his mind against us, but in vain. He saw the spirit they were of, and warned them of the consequences. Thus the arm of the Lord was made bare, and we proved the truth of the precious promise: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," &c. (Isa. liv. 17.)

MY MARRIAGE.

Whilst these things were transpiring amongst us, I

became attached to her who was afterwards my wife. Being members of the same church, we were necessarily often together in the means of grace and conversing one with another. I was very young, and strove very much against these feelings of affection I felt towards her for some time before I opened my mind, being determined, if possible, to suppress them. The more, however, I strove, the weaker I became, and learned experimentally the truth of the following lines:

> "The fondness of a creature's love,
> How strong it strikes the sense!
> Thither the fond affections move,
> Nor can we call them thence."

Having struggled for about six months, I was constrained to make her who was the object of my solicitude acquainted with it, and soon found that our affection was mutual. Thus my heart and affections were in some measure stolen away from my Lord and Master, who had done such great things for my soul. It is the natural tendency even of the most harmless and pure affections of our nature. We find them but a barren soil for the plants of the Lord's right hand planting to grow and thrive therein. Instead of continuing fresh and green in the courts of the Lord's house, they wither and droop; at least I found it was so with me.

After we were married, family difficulties began to come on. My wife was a fruitful vine by the sides of my house, and my children like olive branches around my table. A growing family, the high price of provisions, and little wages for my labour, soon plunged us into difficulties, and we were brought into indigent circumstances. As our privations increased, my mind sank into a very bewildered, wretched, miserable state. All my comfortable frames and feelings in a great measure declined. My poor soul was brought very low. The third chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah was exceedingly applicable to my case: "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day." I felt shut up at a throne of grace. In reading the word of God all was dark and barren, and instead of subsiding, these painful feelings increased: so that I appeared to get worse and worse; no

heart for prayer, reading the word, or hearing, but a backwardness to everything that was spiritually good, insomuch that there was hard struggling to keep up even the form of godliness, which through mercy I was, however, enabled to do, so as not to forsake assembling with the people of God.

This was indeed bitter experience, and I had to cry out, "My leanness, my leanness! Woe unto me." Satan, the accuser of the brethren, set in upon me with his fiery darts, tempting me to think that all my former comforts and enjoyments were delusions, or only my natural passions wrought upon. The devil gave me a long lecture upon the parable of the sower, telling me I was like those that received the seed in stony places, "who hear the word, and anon with joy receive it; yet, having no root in themselves, endure for a while, but in time of temptation fall away." The adversary took pains to impress upon me the apprehension that now tribulation, persecution, and worldly cares upon me, had choked the word, and I was often greatly afraid that such was my case, and would assuredly be my condition at the last, that I should fall back into the world and make shipwreck of faith. I was indeed going and coming in the means of grace; but, like a door upon its hinges, no life, light, nor power in my soul, I seemed to feel only deadness, coldness, hardness of heart, and barrenness of spirit, Satan diligently suggesting that I was one of those who had a form of godliness but were destitute of the power, that I had a name to live whilst I was dead. I feared greatly that I should be overcome by temptation, the evils of my own carnal heart, and the allurements of the world. Left in the dark, under the hidings of my heavenly Father's face, all my spiritual comfort gone, the angel of the bottomless pit apparently let loose upon me, unbelief prevailing, family difficulties increasing, the world frowning, while some laughed me to scorn, saying, "Aha! Aha! So would we have it!" Some of my brethren in the church seemed to look shy at me. My spirit sank still lower. I was indeed troubled and bowed down greatly. I went mourning all the day long. I was ready to wish that I had not joined the church, and often thought of telling the deacons they had better take my name out of the church book, and I would then give all up. Yet I had a

secret something that told me I could not go back into the world if I attempted; but my mind was daily filled with horror lest vengeance should rest upon me. Thus my soul was weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast of gospel comfort and consolation; and as the weaning time literally is a time of trouble, the child cries, and struggles and feels as though it was hardly dealt with, thus it was with me in a spiritual sense. I struggled, murmured, and repined. The ministry of the word was as a dry breast, and I was ready to find fault with the preacher, for I was sure he did not preach so well as formerly. If I took up my Bible, I found no comfort; those portions of God's word that in past days had been so much blest to my soul, appeared to have no beauty nor glory in them. I could say in my very heart:

"If in thy word I look,
Such darkness fills my mind,
I only read a sealed book,
But no relief can find."

Shut up at a throne of grace, in darkness, I sought the Lord, but could not find him. The evils of my heart so stirred up when upon my knees before him that I was a terror to myself, and wondered that he did not spurn me from his presence. I have risen from my knees, feeling such a vile polluted wretch that I have said with Job, "O Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

In this state of conflict, sorely buffeted, I was much tried providentially, and at times my soul was filled with angry, rebellious feelings against the Lord, because of my difficulties. I was obliged to work very hard, and had little to eat, scarcely enough to support nature. Like Ephraim, I was as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, kicking and murmuring and repining, and with Jonah ready to say, "I do well to be angry, even unto death;" and with David, "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest! Lo, then would I wander afar off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." (Ps. lv. 5-8.) At times I was tempted to run away and leave my wife, children, creditors, and all my troubles behind me; but the ties of nature I found too strong. I

could not turn my back on my dear wife, who was doing all she could to make me and the dear children comfortable as far as our poor circumstances would allow. Love to my children, too, bound me fast. But a far more powerful tie than natural affection kept me during these sore temptations; namely, "the fear of the Lord," which, though apparently dormant, yet lay hidden in my heart; so that, while the tempter was saying, "Go, and leave all thy troubles behind thee," a secret something said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" I knew if I did so, I should displease the Lord, and his hand would go out against me, as it did against Naomi, and that he would deal yet more bitterly with me, whilst I should wound my own spirit, and "a wounded spirit who can bear?" I felt, too, that I should grieve my brethren, and open the mouths of the enemies to blaspheme. The camp of the ungodly would rejoice; for some were beginning to say that my end would be that I should go for a soldier. Bless the Lord, who enabled me to endure temptation, and who has kept me to this day and clothed my enemies with shame. In the best sense of the word, I have been a soldier more than fifty years, fighting hard under the conquering, triumphant banner of King Jesus against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and have a good hope through grace that I shall overcome at last through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.

I well remember getting up one morning, sorely tried in my family and in my poor soul, not knowing what to do, whither to flee or how to tarry, there being no appearance of things being better, but worse, when the following words were brought with such power in my soul that I never forgot them and the benefit I received: "For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." (Ps. lxxiii. 14.) The words I knew were spoken by David, the man after God's own heart, and I was led to reason thus: "Who can tell but I may be found right at last?" I had a secret confidence given me like that of Job (xxiii. 10): "When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The Lord, before whom I write, knows what a stay this portion of his word was to my poor afflicted and tempest-tossed soul. I was not brought out of bondage for several months, but hope, which is an anchor of the soul,

stayed my mind, so that, as a vessel of mercy, I rode upon the storm, not so much distressed as heretofore about my interest in Christ and temporal affairs, looking by faith to my spiritual Pilot to steer the vessel into the haven of rest.

From this time I began to be more concerned that the Lord would appear for me and deliver my soul, by restoring unto me "the joy of his salvation." This stirred up my mind to be more constant at a throne of grace; though, when on my knees, still shut up in feeling as in prison, I have often said that Peter was not faster bound when chained in the prison between the two soldiers, with all the inner and outward doors and gates locked fast, than my poor soul was; so that I had to say with David, "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy name."

Bless the Lord, who from this time began to pour down his Holy Spirit as a Spirit of grace and supplication more abundantly into my soul, so that I could not desist from prayer. Evening and morning, and at noon, I called upon the Lord. As one of God's elect, I cried "day and night unto him." The language of Paul (Rom. viii. 26, 27) was a great encouragement at this time: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." I could find no words so expressive of the feelings of my soul as Bible words. My daily language was, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord, save, or I perish!" "Lord, help me!" "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me!" "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand?" "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." "Unclean, unclean! within, and without!" "When I would do good, evil is present with me!" "O wretched man that I am!" was often the cry of my soul.

In this state of bondage my soul was held for some months, unbelief working very powerfully, the adversary telling me my prayers were not heard, and as a proof of it, as I well knew, they were not answered. "Give it up, pray no more," was his constant importunity. I could well say:

"How long, O Lord, shall I complain,
Like one that seeks his God in vain?
Canst thou thy face for ever hide,
And I still pray and be denied?"

Oh the sinkings and wretchedness, the deep searchings of heart and tribulation I had to wade through! darkness upon my path in both providence and grace. In temporal things all my efforts were thwarted, my family was increasing, provisions were rising, and wages falling. I was hemmed in, and it appeared impossible to get on. As it respects acting faith, as some call it, laying hold of the promises, and bringing light, life, and joy, and peace into my soul, I could just as soon have commanded my soul to leave the body. A nominal speculative faith could not support nor relieve my mind, in such conflicts between the flesh and the Spirit as Paul describes in Gal. v. 17. I was a burden to myself, and could hardly bear to speak to any one on the common things of life; yet the Lord did not forsake me, but wrought in me by his Holy Spirit of prayer and supplication, so that neither men nor devils could prevent me from crying to the Lord to have mercy upon me and help me. I had also a greater relish for the word of the Lord and the means of grace, though when amongst my brethren I was mostly as a dumb man; insomuch so that some of them said I had got the muzzle upon my mouth. I had indeed the yoke upon my jaws, not only little to say, but when the gospel table was spread before me I could not eat until the yoke was taken off. (See Hos. xi. 4.)

Whilst thus exercised, I often went into the adjoining woods, where I found a solitary place, to which I resorted as often as I could for prayer and meditation. This place was graciously made a Bethel to my soul. I had often gone thither weeping, bearing the precious grace of supplication, and at the Lord's time I returned rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me. (Ps. cxxvi. 6.)

One day, when on my knees in this solitary place, pouring out my strong cries and groanings to the Lord for help and deliverance, the following words were brought to my mind by the blessed Spirit with such power, sweetness, and heavenly dew that I hope never to forget the joy I felt that day: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and

his ears are open to their cry." (Ps. xxxiv. 15.) With them there came into my soul such life, love, power, liberty, and assurance that I felt all my darkness, hardness, fears, and temptations immediately depart. I burst into a flood of tears, and said, "Dear and blessed Lord, and are thine eyes over such a poor sinful, polluted, miserable wretch as I am? And have thine ears been open to my poor prayers, breathings and longings after thee?" My blessed Lord said, "Yes; mine eyes are over thee, and mine ears attentive to thy cries, notwithstanding all thy fears and misgivings." I had often been upon my knees before the Lord, and could not lay claim to one promise in such a manner as to bring joy and peace into my soul; but now the blessed Remembrancer brought the exceeding great and precious promises to my mind as fast as I could repeat them, and every promise I saw and felt was made to me and all his chosen people in Christ Jesus, in whom they are sure and steadfast unto the glory of God. I felt from the Spirit's bearing witness with my spirit that Jesus was my Saviour and Redeemer. A covenant God in Christ Jesus was my heavenly Father, who had promised "never to leave nor forsake me, but be with me in all my troubles." I could now say with the psalmist: "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." The Holy Spirit I felt was my Leader, Director, and Comforter. My soul was again brought out of bondage into the sweet liberty of the sons of God. The word of the Lord, in its declarations of mercy, invitations, precepts, and exhortations dropped like refreshing rain into my thirsty soul, under the bedewing influence of the Holy Spirit. I have often said in the course of my ministry, "He is the best Preacher I ever sat under." As he then preached to my soul, every word was spoken in season, and so blessedly adapted to meet my case that I could not forbear blessing and praising the Lord, as a prayer-hearing and answering God, who had once more proclaimed liberty to the captive, and set the poor prisoner free, who had been sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, and brought me again into the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love, giving me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that I might be called one of the trees of right-

eousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. My cup of joy ran over.

How long I was in communion with the Lord upon my knees I cannot tell; but when I arose, I had no desire to go home, as my soul was upon the Mount of Transfiguration, beholding the beauty and glory of the Lord; and it was good to be there. I began to walk to and fro in a footpath in the adjoining meadow, until a late hour of the night. My soul was so taken up with my dear Lord and Master that I could say of him as the church of old: "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the Chiefest amongst ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. His mouth is most sweet," in speaking peace and pardon to the guilty sinner. His blood I felt to be most precious, as my redemption price, and as a "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." He appeared glorious, as my law-fulfilling righteousness. I felt I had a firm standing upon him as the Rock of my salvation, and that I was complete and accepted in him; that he was my wisdom to guide and direct me, my strength to support me, my power to keep me, my Prophet to teach me, my Priest to atone for my sins and sympathize with me, my King to reign in me and over me. I saw him whom my soul loveth by precious living faith in the triumph of his cross, and the power of his resurrection, the glory of his ascension, and triumphant entrance into heaven as the great Head of his body the church, with all the fulness of grace and salvation in him. Oh how sweet and precious was he to my soul! I could once more say in the confidence of faith, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." My soul was so taken up with my Lord and Master that I felt I could have stayed with him all night; but the thought came into my mind that my wife would wonder what had become of me; so I dried up my tears, and returned home with the joy of salvation in my soul.

MY CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

From this time I date my call to the work of the ministry. Being, as afore described, upon my knees, blessing and praising the Lord who had so graciously appeared to me again as my Saviour and Redeemer with love and mercy in his heart, the power of the Lord came upon me in a

manner I never felt before, moving me to preach the gospel I then felt to be so sweet and precious to my soul, unto poor prisoners of hope that were shut up and could not come forth. (Ps. lxxxviii. 8.) I felt such bowels of mercy and compassion towards them that my soul longed to tell them of his love and tenderness to poor perishing sinners. Oh what a strong desire I had wrought in my soul to speak a word of comfort to them that are weary! to tell them how I had proved to the joy and satisfaction of my soul that the Lord is faithful to all his promises and covenant engagements. Yea, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself." "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel." I have proved him to be a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God; "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary, from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death, to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem."

From this time, the Spirit of the Lord God came upon me to preach the gospel, as a word of comfort to mourners in Zion. The grace of God that was given me constrained me earnestly to desire to be instrumental in his hands in preaching deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, as I had been for many months. I had such a love to the Lord, his precious truth and his blood-bought and Spirit-taught family, such a desire for the in-gathering of God's elect that are scattered abroad upon the dark mountains of sin and iniquity, and for the peace and prosperity of Zion, that I was constrained to give myself up to him with a firm and happy persuasion of his ability and willingness to keep what I had committed to his hands against that day. I was enabled to say, "Dear Lord, I am thine. Thou hast loved me, and died for my sins, and called me by thy grace. Thou hast manifested thyself to me as my Saviour and Redeemer, by shedding thy love abroad in my heart by thy Holy Spirit which is given to me, and by sealing peace and pardon in my soul by an application of the blood of sprinkling to my conscience, that 'speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.'" My soul said, "How can I do enough, dear Lord,

for thee, who hast done so much for me? I am thy servant, willing to do and suffer whatever will be for thine honour and glory, the furtherance of the gospel, and the good of thy chosen people, if thou wilt be with me, to strengthen and support me in it." It was deeply impressed upon my mind that the many trials and difficulties I had been wading through, both in providence and grace, especially the soul-troubles, and the comforts I had felt, were designed by the Lord, not only for my good but for the benefit of his church and people.

From this time I felt more life, light, and power in prayer and reading the word of God than ever I had felt before. The Bible became my constant companion. "My delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his word did I meditate day and night." I had such a thirst for the word of God that I took it with me to my looms, and placed it in such a position that I could read as I worked. Thus I was reading and praying over the word of God from morning till evening. Sometimes I was a long while in reading a chapter, asking myself such questions as these: "Do I know the truth of the things I am reading by heart-felt experience? Do not these truths meet my case? Is it not my desire to live upon them, and, like the children of the elect lady, to walk in the truth in all its precepts, exhortations, and ordinances? It was indeed my meat and drink to do the will of God. Oh the many strong heartfelt cries and prayers that I put up to the Lord as I read his word, that I might be taught of God the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, that I might be able to teach others "the things I had handled and tasted of the word of life!" I was so in love with my Bible that I had it behind my pillow, and read a portion of it the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. Yea, I was so delighted with the word of God that often when I entered the house and saw the Bible on the chimney-piece, it rejoiced my spirit. The words of Paul (Gal. ii. 8) were much impressed upon my mind: "For he that wrought effectually in Peter, to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles." This effectual, mighty working of the Spirit of the Lord in my soul, I cannot find language to describe. I felt sometimes like a bottle that was ready to burst, and earnestly besought the Lord that I might be raised up by his great power,

fitted and qualified by him to preach the gospel to the comforting of his people, and the in-gathering of his elect. The words also of Paul (Eph. iii. 7, 8) were, and still are, great words in my soul: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Truly I saw and felt myself to be less than the least of all saints, an obscure, illiterate, despised youth, in poverty and distress, and with such low humble views and feelings of myself that I would have given up the thoughts of preaching, but the effectual working of the Spirit and power of God in my soul was such that I could not give it up. Like Jeremiah, I felt that the word of the Lord was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones. (Jer. xx. 9.) The Epistles of Paul to Timothy I read over and over again, with meditation and prayer, finding great benefit therein. Some portions of them were very powerfully impressed upon my mind; such as the 11th and 12th verses of the first chapter of the first Epistle: "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." I felt that a dispensation of the gospel was committed unto me, and that necessity was upon me; yea, "woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" that was so blest to my soul; and again: "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." (1 Tim. ii. 7.) I knew that men's ordination was worth nothing unless I was ordained of God, as Paul and Jeremiah were, and that I could never preach to the comfort and consolation of God's poor, tried, afflicted, tempest-tossed people unless I was fitted, qualified, set apart, and sent by the Lord. "How shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that bringeth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth," in heaven above, over angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; upon earth as the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords; and over the passions of men and devils, saying unto

them, as to the tempestuous wind and raging sea, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." He reigns in his church as a body, which is his spiritual kingdom; in the hearts of his people by his word, Spirit, and grace, through righteousness unto eternal life; and over all the trials and afflictions of his people, and will see to it that all things, however painful and trying, shall work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose. In 1 Tim. iii. Paul saith, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." I read the former part of this chapter many times, and prayed that if it was the Lord's will to make me a Christian bishop or an overseer of his flock, I might be to his honour and glory, watching over his people in holy fear; and that my walk and conduct might be such as is laid down in this chapter. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath heard my prayer, and kept me to this day going in and out before him and his dear people, and has not suffered me to bring a reproach upon his cause.

In the fourth chapter of this Epistle, Paul speaks of Timothy "as a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, whereunto he had attained." I knew that there were many unworthy ministers, even ministers of Satan, some of whom preached unscriptural doctrines, and others whose conduct and conversation were a disgrace to their profession. My soul cried mightily to the Lord that he would make me like Timothy, "a good minister of Jesus Christ," and like Barnabas, concerning whom it is said (Acts xi. 24), "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost;" I often kneeled down before the Lord, with my Testament open at these words, and begged and besought the Lord to make me such a one as Barnabas, who was a Son of Consolation to the saints of the most high God; and that I might be also "a Boanerges; that is, a Son of thunder," to the awakening of sinners dead in trespasses and sins; so that much people might be added to the Lord. I told the Master that he knew my heart, and that when in my right mind my highest ambition was that I might be made by him like these good men, honouring him, and wanting nothing but what he had promised saying, "Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly

esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.) The latter part of 1 Tim. iv., from the 12th verse to the end, was often read with many cries to the Lord that he would enable me to obey the directions given: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The 15th verse in particular: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all," was much impressed upon my mind; and I pray the Lord to keep them there more and more. And I thank God who has in some measure enabled me to obey these very seasonable exhortations. Whoever they may be that neglect and undervalue them, if they be the ministers of Jesus Christ, it is greatly to their Lord and Master's dishonour, much against their own comfort, and a bar to their usefulness in the ministry. It should ever be kept in mind that the exhortation is: "Give thyself wholly to them, and take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine (that it be the doctrine according to godliness), and continue in them (at all times and seasons); for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

What a mercy it is, in this day of awful departure from the truth, to be enabled to stand fast in the truth, and having done all to stand, quitting ourselves like men, being strong in the Lord, and the power of his might. When I read such words, my soul caught fire from their holy and blessed directions. Also: "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." My soul was full of crying, that the Lord would make known his mind and will concerning me, that I might be satisfied upon this subject. But instead of this he let me feel more and more my own weakness, and suffered me for a season to be sorely buffeted and tempted. I thus proved the truth of Luther's words: "Temptation, persecution, meditation, and prayer make a minister." I was sorely tried in the fire of temptation, insomuch that, being greatly bowed down, I often wondered where the scene would end.

As I read the word of God and prayed over it, I soon began to find that my faith must be tried. As it is written:

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Our Lord and Master after his baptism, and before his entrance into the ministry, was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. "For we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," that he might be able to succour his poor, tempted, afflicted, tried people; and the Christian minister that is to be made a blessing to the Lord's tempted, tried people must know what sore temptations mean, having felt them in his own soul. I have not read of any in modern times that were more tempted and tried than Luther, Bunyan, and Huntington; and in their ministry and writings during the last century none have been made a greater blessing to the Lord's poor, afflicted, tempted, and tried family than the two latter.

The enemy came in upon me like a flood, and unbelief and carnal reason began to work very powerfully in my poor sinful soul. The tempter said, "What! Such an insignificant creature as thou art, a compound of ignorance, poverty and distress, persecuted and set at nought by the world, and withal such an illiterate creature that thou canst but just read and write; what! Thou set up for a preacher and teacher! Why, the whole country will be up, and thou wilt be hooted through the streets if ever it gets known thou hast got it into thy head to be a parson." My spirit sank, and I felt ashamed at the thoughts of these things. Unbelief and temptation got such fast hold upon me, in consequence of these suggestions, that, strange as it may appear to some who know not their own weakness, notwithstanding what I had felt of the exceeding greatness of the power of God in my soul, the devil caught me, and held me fast for a season in this stronghold of his. (See 2 Cor. x. 3.) Sometimes, when on my knees beseeching the Lord to put me into the ministry, the enemy said, "Thou dost not believe that God can make thee into one of his ministering servants; and how foolish and vain to pray for something

thou dost not believe that he can do. Is it not written: 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him?' Now, thou dost not believe that he can grant thee thy desire; and what is the use of praying for it any more?" Under these feelings, I was determined if possible to give it up; for whenever I attempted to pray that the Lord would send me to labour in his vineyard, the above text for weeks together always stared me in the face; nor could I get from under this bondage with all my tugging; neither could I give up praying for the blessing. Such a conflict took place in my mind that I almost became weary of my life, and greatly longed to get rid of all thoughts of becoming a minister. Like Moses, when following the humble occupation of a shepherd, and the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush, commanding him to go and deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, but who, seeing and feeling his own unfitness and the great importance of the work, began to make excuses, saying unto God, "Who am I that I should go? I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. O Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of whom thou wilt send." Like Jeremiah, too, I would fain have been excused, saying, "Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." Thus, when the power of God comes upon a poor, weak, helpless, polluted worm, to send him forth in the name of the Lord, he is sure to sink in his own esteem, and to make him cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" My soul could enter into the feelings of poor Gideon, who, while threshing his corn to hide it from the Midianites, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, "The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour. Go in this thy might, and thou shalt deliver Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Have not I sent thee?" Gideon's reply entered into my case and circumstances so fully that I have often been greatly encouraged by it: And he said unto him, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Gideon was in such poor circumstances, and a man of such little note, the least in his father's house, and had such humble views of himself, he

could not think that anything could be done by him for Israel's deliverance. He would fain have had the message sent by some one else. But the Lord will not be defeated in his purposes and designs by the weakness, fears, and timidity of his people. Gideon was to be the honoured instrument in the Lord's hand for the deliverance of Israel; and when the Lord's time came, "The Spirit of the Lord God came upon him, and he blew the trumpet, and the people gathered themselves unto him." But Gideon, still timid and doubtful whether the thing was really and truly from the Lord, wanted a token: "And Gideon said unto the Lord, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon the earth beside, then shall I know thou will save Israel by mine hand as thou hast said." Full of anxiety, he arose early in the morning to see what state the fleece was in, whether wet or dry. And behold it was wringing full of water, as he immediately found it. Did not this great condescension of the Lord put an end to all his scruples and his fears? No. Unbelief, that great Goliath who made the armies of Israel to tremble, still works. The enemy suggested that it might only be chance. His confidence is shaken; he again fears and trembles, and, with the humility and solemnity of Abraham when pleading with the Lord on the behalf of the inhabitants who dwelt upon the plain, Gideon said unto God, "Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once. Let me prove thee but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew." (Judges vi. 39.) Behold the great condescension of the Lord. Instead of upbraiding his weak, timid, unbelieving servant, upon whom he was about to confer such honour, his request was granted: "Lo, there was dew on all the ground, and the fleece alone was dry." The Lord is determined to secure all the honour and glory arising from the deliverance and salvation of his people to himself. To accomplish this, Gideon, the least, and perhaps the most unlikely person in all his father's house, was made choice of as their deliverer. A man naturally of weak, timid mind, and in poor circumstances. Lest he and his army should take the glory of the victory to themselves,

their number, thirty and two thousand, was reduced to three hundred, that lapped water like a dog. With these few men the Lord delivered Israel, with Gideon for their leader, out of the hands of the Midianites, and thus got to himself an everlasting name, so that no flesh should glory in his presence; according as it is written: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Though these things were greatly calculated to encourage my mind, seeing that others of the Lord's servants had the same humble views of themselves, and were like myself the subjects of fears and timidity of spirit, though the Lord had made bare his holy and omnipotent arm for their rescue, yet the reading of these things, though they encouraged, did not deliver my soul. I was still in the snare of the fowler. The text before mentioned (Heb. xi. 6): "For he that cometh unto God," &c., was still uppermost in my mind. I felt in reality that I had not faith in the ability of the Lord to do this great thing. It appeared to me impossible that such a poor polluted wretch as I could ever be made useful as a minister of the gospel. So powerful was the conflict between the spirit of prayer that was poured down into my soul and the powerful temptations of Satan, the workings of unbelief and carnal reasonings, that I felt, at times, as if my heart would break. My soul was so engaged with these things that I longed to be alone as much as possible. I was no company for anyone. My wife knew not what was going on in my mind, neither could I tell her nor anyone else. She was sorely troubled to see me in such distress, and thought it was our temporal trials that bowed me down, and caused so many sighs and groans. She feared I was dissatisfied with my married state, seeing that we were brought into such poor circumstances. This, however, was not the cause; my temporal difficulties had little weight with me at this time.

The tempter also assailed me upon the authenticity of the scriptures, and laboured hard to bring to my mind apparent contradictions, haunting me with infidel principles, of which, for brevity's sake, I forbear to speak particularly. At this time I was, however, so overwhelmed with these things that I was in truth a man of sad countenance. Being now in the fining pot, or crucible, I wandered about in the woods, fields, and byways, pondering matters over in my

heart, weighing my motives, praying and beseeching the Lord to make known his mind and will unto me in this important affair. My neighbours said that I was going crazy, and the cry went forth that I had read the Bible and studied religion till I was gone out of my mind. According to public report, therefore, I was twice crazy; first when the Lord was making me in some measure sensible of what I was as a lost sinner, and again when he was about to put me into the ministry, though I showed no marks of insanity, but was truly and solemnly devoted to the Lord, and my conduct and conversation becoming the gospel. They thought it strange that I did not run with them to the same excess of riot. Thus I became a reproach to my neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that were round about me, and, like David (Ps. lxix. 12), "I was the song of the drunkard." But these things made little impression on my mind. The great question was, "Has the Lord designed me for the work of the ministry?"

One evening, upon my knees before the Lord, in the same solitary place where he was so graciously pleased to appear for me aforetime, the Lord applied these precious words to my soul: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry," of which I have spoken particularly in a former part of my narrative. I was there pleading with the Lord, in my poor broken-hearted way, to bless me with faith in his ability to raise me up to preach his blessed gospel, when he was graciously pleased to reveal himself to my soul in greater beauty, majesty, power, and glory than I had ever seen or felt before. The language of David in Ps. lxviii. 18 came with great power into my soul: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." The Holy Spirit, whose prerogative it is to glorify Christ, led me to view him as the "Immortal Word" that created the heavens and the earth, and all that therein is: "Who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." I saw him in his beauty and glory, as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. I was led to look on him in the garden of Gethsemane, resisting unto blood, striving against sin; also

by precious faith to view him on the cross, bearing all our sins in his own body on the tree, enduring the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. The Holy Spirit bare witness with my spirit that all my sins, and the curse of the law due to them, were for ever put away by the sacrifice and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer; that he had overcome the world, vanquished death and hell, having swallowed up death in victory. I felt in my soul that I knew him, and the power of his resurrection, raising me above all my sins, doubts and fears. I beheld him by faith in his glorious and triumphant entrance into heaven, with all power both in heaven and upon earth in his hand, and that, as the Lord of the harvest, it was his prerogative to send forth labourers into his vineyard: "Who, when he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, received gifts for men" (ministerial gifts); "some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." I had such a sweet and solemn view of and faith given me in his power and ability to raise me up, fit and qualify me for the work, that I blushed for shame that, like Thomas, I should be so faithless and unbelieving, doubting his ability to send by whom he would send, however unlikely they might be for the work, either in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. I could now tell my great adversary that he was a liar from the beginning, and that I had faith to believe that God is, and that he is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The snare of the arch-fowler was broken, and my soul escaped. All my fears and carnal fleshly reasonings fled before the power and glory of the Lord like the mists before the sun. With a flood of tears I blessed and praised the Lord, and told him that I hoped that I should never doubt his power and ability to put me into the ministry any more.

When I arose from my knees, I had no desire to go home, but to abide with my dear Lord and Master; so I betook myself, as on a former occasion, to my favourite walk in the adjoining meadow. Here I stayed as long as I prudently could in duty to my family.

The sweet and blessed intercourse I had with a Triune Jehovah that night I hope never to forget. The doctrine

of the Trinity in Unity was opened up to my view in such a glorious, blessed manner as I never saw and felt before. It is said, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." The everlasting, well-ordered covenant of grace and salvation was opened up to my soul; the Father's eternal purpose of love, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our covenant Head, his wisdom in devising the plan of salvation, wherein he could be just, and justify ungodly sinners, securing all the honour and glory to himself and all spiritual blessings to his chosen people. I saw Christ in his covenant engagements and incarnation in such beauty and glory that my soul greatly rejoiced in him. I had a sweet view of him as my Prophet, Priest, and King, and Friend that loves at all times, my Elder Brother, who had gone before to take possession of the inheritance; that he was able to do all for me that he had put into my heart to pray to him for; that he had promised to strengthen and support me in all the troubles that I might have to pass through; and that he could give me a mouth and wisdom, which all my enemies could neither gainsay nor resist. I could now see him as the Lord of the harvest, whose prerogative is to send forth labourers into his vineyard, and that he had reserved to himself the power of choosing them and fitting them for the work, in order that his wisdom might shine the brighter, and that the excellency of the power might evidently appear to be of God, that he might thus effectually abase the pride of man in picking up such unlikely characters as myself: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh shall glory in his presence. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I knew that I was not one of the worldly wise, mighty, or noble; but one of the foolish, weak, base, and despised, and one of the things that are not; so I saw I was the very character that Lord was forming for himself to show forth his praise.

On this memorable evening I especially saw the necessity of the teaching of the blessed Spirit, not only as the beginner, carryer on, and completer of the work of grace in the souls of his people, but also as the anointer of his ministering servants, and who has promised that the word of the Lord spoken by them shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish whatsoever he pleases. This blessed revelation and foretaste of immortal glory greatly strengthened my soul in the faith. I felt willing to do or suffer anything that my Lord and Master might call me to, such a giving up of myself to the Lord did I feel at this time. My stay in this world appeared very short, even if I attained the years of threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they should be fourscore, they would only be as a shadow, that appears for a little time, and that I should soon have done with all earthly things, and be in glory with the Lord for ever and ever, there to worship and adore a Triune Jehovah,—God the Father for his everlasting electing love, the dear Redeemer for his finished salvation, all of grace from first to last, and the ever-blessed and eternal Spirit for his quickening life-giving power in convincing of sin, leading my soul to Jesus as my All in All, completing the work of grace, and landing my soul in eternal glory.

The things that were revealed and shown to me at this time have been the groundwork of my ministry in all subsequent years; and God forbid that ever I should preach any other gospel but that which I received from Jesus Christ, by the powerful teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Soon after this, I saw in a "Gospel Magazine" the following lines, which were made a great blessing to me:

> "Soon the whole elect shall view
> All the glory God can show,
> And in bliss immortal sing
> Hallelujahs to their King."*

O with what blessed melody did I sing these precious lines with a lively hope blooming with immortal glory! I could now pray to the Lord with confidence in his power and ability to send me forth as one of his ambassadors to declare the glad tidings of salvation to poor perishing sinners.

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* This is a verse in Hymn 518, Gadsby's Selection. It was written by Mr. Gadsby, whose pieces were inserted in the "Gospel Magazine," under the signature of "A Nazarene."

As the blessed Spirit, the Remembrancer, brought the exceeding great and precious promises to my mind, I pleaded them with power and freedom at a throne of grace, and sometimes thought the Lord was about to give me full satisfaction that he had ordained me for the ministry. But, alas! for a time I was greatly disappointed, and the adversary was suffered to tempt and try me again. He suggested that though he was able, was he willing? I was sorely tempted to doubt his willingness. Thus my soul staggered about this important question. I was now in the poor leper's case, when he said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" or, as I used to render the words in my prayers, "Lord, I believe thou canst make me one of thy true and faithful ministering servants, if thou wilt." Thus I was held for some weeks, confident of the Lord's ability, but doubting his willingness. I was determined not to make known to anyone what was going on in my mind. I was led to pray that if the Lord had a work for me to do, he would put it into the hearts of my brethren to bring it forward and encourage me without my saying one word to them upon the subject. I felt such a love to the brethren and zeal for the peace and prosperity of Zion that I cannot express. This passage was daily upon my mind: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." My cry to the Lord was that whenever I opened my mouth amongst his dear people, whether in prayer or conversation, it might be in his fear, that I might speak of the things I had "handled" of the word of life, and that a divine power and sweet savour might attend all I did or said." I lived near the Lord, and had communion and fellowship with him. The following words lay with great weight upon my mind: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." I told the Lord that he knew I did not want to go, if it were not his will, and that I would not without his sanction and approbation. With Moses, I said, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." I was like a little child, begging of the Lord to do with me, for me, and by me as he saw would be most for his honour and glory, and the good of his church and people. I knew that many were put into the ministry by their parents and friends for a livelihood; that,

as the Scriptures say, "they may eat a morsel of bread," and are blind leaders of the blind; so that, if the grace of God prevent not, they will eventually fall into the ditch of eternal perdition. Sometimes even good and gracious men get it into their heads that they are gifted to be preachers, and, whether their pastor will or not, they are determined, like Ahimaaz, who ran with tidings to the king whether Joab would or not. (2 Sam. xviii. 22, 23.)

But to return to my own case: I was daily on my watch-tower, watching the hand of the Lord, as a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God, to see whether he would put it into the hearts of my brethren to encourage me, that I might not, like Uzzah, put my hand to the ark unlawfully, which I was afraid of, had I spoken to any of them in such wise as to move them to it.

One Sunday, after service in the afternoon, our church was called together to hear a letter read from our minister, who was then in London, begging for the debt on our chapel. After it was read, and the answer resolved upon, one of the friends asked me if I would go to our corresponding deacon with the letter, he being at the time unwell. I set off immediately, having three miles to go, little thinking what was going to take place in reference to myself. When I got there, I gave him the letter, telling him what message the church wished him to send to our minister. After we had done talking upon this business, he asked me to go upstairs, that we might have a little conversation between ourselves. He asked me if I had any thoughts about preaching. I said, "Yes, or I should not go so much to hear it. I delight to hear a good gospel sermon." "So do I," said he; "but that is not what I meant. Have you any thoughts of being a preacher yourself?" I said, "Yes; and I think there are few of God's people who are males who, when they are sweetly led into some precious portion of God's word, do not preach many a silent sermon to themselves." He smiled, and said, "Yes, I have indeed preached many a silent sermon during my work, and when walking by the way; yet I am satisfied God never designed me for the work of the ministry." Here he looked at me very solemnly and earnestly whilst he said, "John, can you honestly say, before God and man, that there is nothing upon your mind respecting the ministry but what you say is common to the

people of God?" I inquired what made him so pointed and inquisitive? He replied, "I will honestly tell you all about it. Before our minister went away I attended a church meeting when you were absent. At that meeting our minister said that he believed that the Lord designed you for the work of the ministry, and that though you and he had had no conversation on the subject, yet he was persuaded your mind was much exercised about the work, both day and night; and as we had just been praying the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his vineyard, it was time that something should be done in the case." He moreover told me that there was not an individual at the meeting but what thought the same concerning me. It was therefore mutually agreed that as he and I were very friendly, he was to speak to me first on the subject when opportunity offered. I inquired how it was that our minister and the church had these thoughts concerning me, seeing that I had not said a word on the subject to any person living. "We have been watching," he said, "the dealings of the Lord with you, both in providence and grace; and as my brother deacon said at the meeting, 'When John opens his mouth amongst us, whether in prayer or conversation, there is a deep solemnity, a sweet savour, and life, light, and power attend what he says; so that I feel satisfied the Lord designs him for the work of the ministry.' Now, these have long been likewise my views and feelings concerning you." Whilst he was telling me these things, I was astonished to see the arm of the Lord so clearly revealed as a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. Under these circumstances, I could not refrain from opening unto him my whole heart and soul; and as we sometimes say respecting the good work of grace in the heart, I began where God began with me, touching the work of the ministry. I had a great deal to say, as may be imagined, as it was two o'clock in the morning ere we separated. O what an unbosoming of my whole heart and soul I had that night! The Lord was with us of a truth, and the sweet savour of the name of Jesus was as ointment poured forth. When this is the case, the moments roll on so sweetly that time is forgotten, and we can hardly believe that the hours have passed. I had two miles to go ere I reached home, and part of the way led through the woods

where I had spent so much time in the earlier period of the Lord's work in my soul and in prayer and supplication respecting the ministry. As I went along, I thanked and praised the Lord. I had now the testimony of my friends, and I besought the Lord that I might have his Spirit's testimony that I was anointed by him to preach his gospel.

When I arrived at home, my wife was very cross at my stopping out so long. It was the day for taking home my work, and I had several yards to weave before it was finished, so that my tarrying so late caused her to think I should not be able to finish it in time, and we had not three pennyworth of any kind of food in the house. Thus temporal things appeared very gloomy in her view. My mind was, however, so much taken up with what was of greater importance that I could not speak one cross word to her; but lay down for an hour or two. I then got up to provide for my family as well as I could. I worked hard and read and prayed until noon, when my wife came to say there was nothing for dinner, but that I might rest a little, and she would take my place. I then went out to my favourite place in the wood, taking my Testament with me, being fully persuaded that the Lord had heard my prayers, and that I had sufficient testimony, as far as my brethren were concerned, even before I had entered publicly upon the work. But this was not enough, I wanted to have the testimony of God in such a way as he might think best. For this blessing I kneeled down and besought him that he would bless me with some testimony that he had ordained me to preach his gospel. I had great freedom of access in prayer. When I arose from my knees, I sat down, opening my Testament, as the Lord would have it, at 2 Cor. i. 3—6: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings, which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." In reading these verses, the Lord assured me that

all the tribulations and afflictions I had to pass through, whether in providence or grace, and all the comforts and consolations that had at times abounded in my soul, were not only for my good, but for the benefit of the church and people of God with whom I might have to do; that, as an instrument in the Lord's hand, I might comfort them that were in any trouble with the comfort wherewith I had been comforted of God. I had proved in my own experience that as the sufferings of Christ abounded in me, so my consolation abounded by Christ. Everything appeared to be right, and all things well ordered by the Lord for making me useful in the ministry. As I lay on the ground, weeping for joy, I said, "What, Lord! And is this thy academy in which thou art fitting me for so great a work, even as one of the King's ambassadors to his church and people?" I now felt that I had been sent to the right school, and that the Master had been educating me as he did the poor fishermen. I saw the spiritual superiority of this college to all others. Neither Oxford, nor Cambridge, nor our Dissenting Academies are to be compared with it, from which so many young men come forth full of pride and self-importance and with excellency of speech and man's wisdom; so that the poor afflicted, tried people of God cannot benefit under them, insomuch as few of these teachers know anything of the trials and difficulties they are exercised with. The blessed Spirit again shed abroad the everlasting electing love of God in my soul, that sweet-enlarging, soul-humbling, and God-honouring doctrine so little felt and preached in this day of great profession. He bore witness with my spirit that Christ had redeemed me, so that I could say with the apostle, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." I saw my effectual calling as clear as the sun at noonday. I looked at my manner of life before the Lord laid hold of me, and at my companions who were left in their sins, and were making a mock of my profession, and, with the rest of my ungodly neighbours, laughing me to scorn. Such light shone upon my path that I could now trace the way the Lord my God had led me,—the many fears, temptations, troubles, and deliverances I had experienced, and I knew that I had not had one trial too many. All was for his honour and glory and my good and the benefit of his people.

I felt as firmly persuaded that the Lord would raise me up, and send me forth to preach his gospel, and make me a blessing to his dear people, as I am now that I have been in the ministry more than fifty years, and have been favoured with many tokens of his divine approbation. My cup of joy ran over as I blest and praised my heavenly Father for his manifested love, a precious Christ for his redeeming love and blood, and the Holy Spirit for what he had wrought in me; and I felt persuaded that he would work greater things in me and by me.

I would dwell longer on this subject, but I cannot find words to express all the glorious things I saw and felt during this Bethel visit. I could have remained all day weeping and rejoicing, blessing and praising the Lord; but my duty to my wife and family called me home. So I dried up my tears, and returned to work, in order to get the piece finished; and although without food for the body, I proved the truth of our Lord's words: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The joy of my heart was so great I did not feel to want any food for the body. When my work was finished, I had near three miles to go with it to the master. I went with a glad heart, being fully persuaded that I should see better days in temporal things, as well as spiritual, and that he would clothe my persecutors with shame. When my master came to pay me, he looked at his book, and said, "John, you owe me fourteen shillings." I replied, "That is true." "I must stop it all to-day," he said. I told him it would try me very much if he did. He said, "I am sorry to do it; but I can hardly find money to pay my workmen who do not owe me anything, and I must stop it out of the wages of those who are in debt." I had borrowed twenty shillings from him to make up my May rent, and had paid him six towards it, so that I was yet owing him fourteen. My present work came to twenty shillings, and when he had stopped the fourteen I had only six to take home. As I returned with only six shillings, instead of twenty, I thought of my poor wife and family, knowing that we owed the whole twenty shillings to the person from whom we bought our provisions. I knew he was very poor, and I was afraid when I took only six shillings instead of twenty that he would not let us have any more provisions. My heart

began to sink, for I could not tell how we were to get on. As I was going along, a neighbour whom I met taunted me because of my religion and poverty. I made no reply; but immediately the following words were brought with great power and sweetness to my mind: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Habak. iii. 17, 18.) How seasonable were these words. I felt joyful in the God of my salvation, being persuaded that my heavenly Father knew what we stood in need of. I well remember, as I walked along with the materials upon my back for my next piece, that I said, "I would not change circumstances with the monarch of these realms." My soul was ready to shout for joy, that the mighty God of Jacob, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, was my God and Saviour, that he would be my guide even unto death, and afterwards receive me to glory.

When I reached home, I gave my wife the six shillings, telling her how the master had taken the rest. She replied, "Whatever must we do? If I only take this, I am sure we must have no more provisions, and I am ready to faint. Had we not better go with the six shillings, and get some food elsewhere?" "No," said I. "Take the six shillings to where we owe it; tell the truth, and leave it to the Lord." She did so, and very soon returned, saying we were to have no more provisions until the fourteen shillings were paid. "What must we do now?" was the inquiry. This was the time to try my faith. I said, "There is no way for it, but going to my work and getting on with my next piece." I could not think of going to my friends to borrow, as I could not tell when or how we could repay them; and I thought it might cause a shyness if I was not able. Neither could I go to the deacons or minister to plead poverty; for we were in good health, and able and willing to work whilst many were sick and unable to work, as well as others that were aged and infirm.

One great difficulty at this time was the very high price of provisions, and low rate of wages; so that with the family we had, and the rent we had to pay, it was utterly

out of our power to get sufficient food, much less clothing. We were, in consequence, months together, and had neither butchers' meat nor flour in the house. Wheaten bread was quite out of the question. Our usual living was oatmeal, milk, and potatoes, Our minister, being informed of our circumstances by one of the friends who lived in the neighbourhood, proposed that we should be helped ; but we steadfastly refused, knowing there were some in worse plight than we were. We were determined, whilst we were in health and had work, so far as it was possible, we would shift for ourselves. We never pawned anything, nor received a farthing from the funds of the church till I began to preach to them.

But to return. I and my dear partner and companion in tribulation began our fresh work, and we continued till towards evening, it being the summer season. When I came out of the workshop, I sat down and began to read my Bible; whereupon a neighbour woman came in and said, " You read your Bible and study religion so much that the neighbours all say you are going out of your mind; so I am determined you shall have it no longer." She then took it out of my hands. I made no resistance ; but went upstairs with very keen feelings for my poor wife, who had a fine healthy boy nine months old to suckle, and was ready to faint for want of food. As I was walking to and fro in the room, I passed by a window where lay a Bible. I opened it, as the Lord would have it; and the first words my eyes fixed upon were these: " But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." I said within myself, " What is the connexion ? " And I found that David and his men had been far away in war, and when they returned, expecting to enjoy domestic comfort, found to their great surprise and grief that the Amalekites had invaded the land, burned their city, Ziklag, with fire, and carried away their wives and children captive. Hereupon David and the people that were with him lifted up their voices and wept until they had no more power even to weep. And David was greatly distressed; for he and his men had lost their all,—wives, children, houses, and goods ; but what greatly added to his distress was, " The people spake of stoning him." But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. I was led to contrast my circumstances with David's, and soon found

that my distress was not to be compared with his; for he had not only lost all, whilst I had not lost anything, neither was my life in jeopardy as his appeared to be. The question then arose, "What is there in the Lord God of Israel as a ground of encouragement to one of his tried family when apparently hemmed up, either in providence or grace, and no way appears open to escape?" I was led to see that there was almighty power to deliver, divine wisdom engaged to make a way of escape, infinite goodness to provide, and divine faithfulness to fulfil every promise that he had made. The blessed Comforter brought the promises to my soul as fast as I could repeat them; so that my faith was strong in the Lord.

When I came down from my chamber, the anxiety I felt for my wife and children constrained me to go to my father to tell him the state we were in, hoping that he might help us a little, as he was in tolerable circumstances. I entered the house, pulled off my hat, and sat down; but just as I was about to open my mouth and state my case, my father said, "Well, John, have you brought me any money?" On my replying in the negative, he very angrily said, "You have money for everybody but me; and I will have mine." The case was this: He being a shoemaker, I owed him a little money for shoes, and he knew I had been that day with my work, and he thought I should have taken him part of my wages. I do not remember that he ever spoke so sharply and angrily to me before. For a few minutes I felt as if my heart would break; I was too full to make a reply. I took my hat and came out, and went into the adjoining woods, where I could give vent to my feelings and pour out my heart and soul unto my heavenly Father. Receiving such a blow from one that was so near and dear to me, both by the ties of nature and of grace, and from whom I was hoping to be relieved in this time of great temporal need, was a dreadful stroke; but the Lord, who knows how to speak a word in season to his weary distressed children, dropped these words into my soul with great power and sweetness: "When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." And blessed be his dear name, he was faithful to his word. After I had been upon my knees in the place which had so often been a Bethel to my soul; and there, instead of my heavenly Father frowning and

driving me from his presence, he smiled and showed me that his beloved Son, my Elder Brother, had paid all my spiritual debts; so that he had no demand to make upon me, as a just and righteous God in his holy law, but that, as a believer in Jesus, law and justice were on my side. O what a stay and support was this to my soul! I felt that I was in Jesus Christ, and that there was no condemnation to me.

After having sweet communion and fellowship with my heavenly Father, in the name and mediation of Jesus, for some time, I betook myself to my favourite walk in the meadow, where I stayed till a late hour in meditation and thanksgiving to the Lord, who had given me such strong confidence that he was my God, and was fitting me for the work he had appointed for me. I had also nearness of access to and sweet communion and fellowship with Jesus, who "was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." I remembered my blessed Lord, who said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" and that, when the demand was made for the tribute money, and his purse was empty, his eternal power and Godhead had to be displayed in commanding a fish to bring him a piece of money to pay it.

When I returned home, I found that the female before mentioned who took the Bible out of my hand had lent my wife a handful or two of meal, of which she had made some porridge, and she had reserved some for me, but my stomach was so weak from long fasting that I could not eat it, as I had no milk to make it palatable; so I went supperless to bed, and soon fell asleep, having had little rest the night before, and worked hard during the day.

In the morning, when I awoke, I felt the pangs of hunger more keenly than ever. These trials have caused me to feel very tenderly towards the poor that are in want, and have greatly increased my pleasure in being the means in the Lord's hands of relieving them.

I hope my reader will pardon my being so particular in detailing these circumstances, which occurred on the memorable day when the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, bore witness with my spirit that I was to go forth as an ambassador of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Some who have never been in such trying circumstances may think lightly

of them, and may blame me for recording them so minutely. Let such recollect that the Lord has thought proper to record in his word (1 Kings xvii.) that his servant, the prophet Elijah, when in the wilderness, was fed by ravens and drank of the brook, and when the brook dried up, the Lord sent him to Zarephath, a city of Zidon, assuring him that he had commanded a woman there to sustain him. Was she in good circumstances, with plenty of this world's goods, who was thus appointed to provide for the Lord's servant during the time of the famine in Israel? Had it been so, the power and glory of the Lord would not have been so conspicuous, nor the faith and patience of the prophet and widow so tried. On the contrary, as Elijah entered the city, he found the poor woman gathering a few sticks, for she was without fuel, and he called unto her and said, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water that I may drink;" and as she was going to fetch it (the poor dear man of God, hungry and thirsty, his soul fainting in him), he said unto her, "Bring me a morsel of bread in thine hand." The woman, turning toward him in the anguish of her soul, said, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, and I am gathering two sticks that we may eat it and die." As soon as the prophet heard this tale of woe, the Spirit of the Lord moved him to say, "Fear not; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the Lord send rain upon the earth." It will be remembered that our Lord makes honourable mention of this poor widow woman, as recorded by Luke, iv. 25.

My reader will naturally be led to inquire how we got food in this our time of need and extremity. On the Tuesday morning my wife went to my mother, and told her of our destitute state; and she, with a mother's heart, helped us through that day, and the next day being the day my master received back his work, I told my wife she should go and tell him our distress, and that I hoped he would help us. When she was gone, I went to the Lord as the Breaker to go before her, and incline the master's heart to help us. She was not long absent, considering the distance. On my asking her how she had sped, she said, "When I opened the warehouse door I found the master alone. He

turned round and with a smile said, 'Well, mistress, what is your will this morning?' I said, 'We want a little help.' He opened a drawer and took out a one-pound note, and gave it me, saying, 'Will that serve you?'" Thus a way was opened for us, without our going amongst our brethren, pleading poverty in order to move them to help us.

Paul tells us (2 Cor. xi. 27) that he had been in weariness, painfulness, in watchings oft, in hunger and thirst, in fastings oft, in cold and nakedness. Instead of being ashamed of these things, I rather count it an honour to be a companion with that eminent saint and servant of the most high God in this path of tribulation. Lazarus passed through the vale of poverty and affliction into Abraham's bosom, whilst the rich glutton who fared sumptuously every day, receiving his good things here, afterwards lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. I have often besought the Lord that, like Lazarus, I might have my evil things in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. Let none despise the Lord's poor, for he hath not despised them, but said by the apostle James, "Hearken, my beloved brethren. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" There is no disgrace attached to poverty, where there is industry, frugality, and honesty. Our Lord and Master was poor and virtuous. Perfect honour and uprightness were only to be found in him. I have often been ashamed of the conduct of many professors, and of ministers too, who have lived beyond their means, and have been over head and ears in debt and disgrace through pride and extravagance. "My soul, come not thou into their secret; mine honour, be not with them united."

From the time that the Lord satisfied my mind that he designed me for the work of the ministry, he shined most blessedly into my soul by his Holy Spirit, in reading the good word of his grace, giving me spiritual understanding in the deep and glorious mysteries of his everlasting gospel. When our minister returned from London, the deacon told him that he had gone over the matter with me, and informed him of the state of my mind on the subject. From this time we had frequent conversations about the great work I was about to enter upon. I entreated him not to hurry on the affair, but wait some fit opportunity. At the next prayer-

meeting I well remember that he prayed that the Spirit and power of the Lord might rest upon those appointed by him to be heralds of salvation, that there might go forth from among us those who would proclaim the glad tidings of the gospel to poor perishing sinners, and that he would make a way in his providence for such whose minds might be exercised about the ministry. My soul felt to agonize in response to these petitions.

Whilst my mind was thus exercised, two young men went to the Academy from Rochdale. I knew them well, especially one of them, who was brought up in our neighbourhood, and had attended the Independent chapel at Hall Fold, and sat in the next pew to my father's. We were frequently together in the road, and had conversation. When he had been some time at the Academy, he came over to see his friends. As I was returning home from chapel one Sunday evening, I met with him in the street, and we walked together some distance; but he was so lifted up with pride he did not condescend to speak to me. He had on a black dress and white neckerchief, quite canonical. He appeared as though he scarce knew how to walk, he was so carried away with himself. His gait and manner quite disgusted me. I looked earnestly at him, and said to myself, "If this is the effect of going to Academies, do, dear Lord, ever keep me from such nurseries of pride." The Lord gave me that night more than ever a fervent, earnest spirit of prayer that he would fit and qualify, and send me forth and bless my labours, that it might still be seen by his churches that he both could and did raise up from the college of fishermen such as he designed to honour.

From this time I kept my eye upon these two young men. They finished their academical studies, and he whom I have just mentioned married a person whose father possessed some property. He got a small chapel in the north; the cause was low, and it remained so all his days. His wife's father was obliged to help out their scanty means, or they would have been very badly off. I made all the inquiries I could after him with respect to his usefulness, but could never hear of any particular blessing attending his ministry, either in the conversion of sinners or the comforting of saints. He has been dead some years. After his death his wife's relations gave me more information about him, and I

was surprised at the poor account they gave. The other young man went into the south, and married a woman with a little property, but very seldom preached, the Lord having no work for him to do.

These things took place in the summer of 1813, the year that Mr. Huntington died. Our minister was at that time in London, and in a letter he sent home he used this expression: "Huntington is gone where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest." These words followed me for many days. I knew that he had been a true and faithful servant of the Lord, and made a great blessing to the church of Christ. My soul cried earnestly to the Lord for him to raise up many more such valiant men in Israel. I did not begin to preach that year, though I had many testimonies from both God and man that I was designed for the work.

The first time that I met with our esteemed friend and supporter, Mr. Thomas Niven, whose name I have before mentioned, was at a prayer-meeting. I had often seen him under the ministry of the word, but had not spoken to him. On this occasion our minister asked me to give out a hymn and engage in prayer. I did so. The next day Mr. Niven went to him to inquire who the young man was who engaged in prayer the night before. After telling him my name, he said, "Mark my words; the Lord designs that lad for the work of the ministry." He always said the impression never left him; but the more we were together the more he was confirmed in it. I could mention many more cases of a similar nature, but for the sake of brevity I forbear.

One morning I got up very early to my work, but first took a walk into the fields. It was fine and starlight, and I was led to consider "the heavens, the work of the Lord's fingers, the moon and stars as ordained by him." I saw that "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." Whilst I was gazing upon these heavenly bodies, it was brought powerfully to my mind that the great Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that therein is was my God, my Saviour, and my Friend. O what a sweet and solemn view I had that memorable morning of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and of the work of each Person in the economy

of redemption! The Holy Spirit enabled me to claim my interest in each. The greatest humility and solemnity I ever felt was on this morning. I have felt greater ecstasies of joy, but never a firmer persuasion of my interest in the covenant of grace and salvation.

MY ENTRANCE INTO THE MINISTRY.

One Lord's day evening, after service, I went into our minister's house. He was sitting in the parlour with two or three friends. In the course of conversation, in which he appeared to be in a very humble frame of mind, he said, "Friends, if the Lord spare us until next Wednesday week, we will have a preaching instead of a prayer-meeting." One of the friends inquired who was to be the preacher. He replied "The lot will fall upon Jonah;" and looking earnestly at me, he said, "John, you do not need to open your mouth any more by way of excuse; it must not be put off any longer. I have already a guilty conscience, when upon my knees before the Lord, for allowing it so long. We are praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his vineyard, and there are destitute churches that we have to do with, crying to the Lord to give them pastors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding; so I am determined that, God helping, you shall speak amongst us at the time named." He spoke so decidedly that I knew it was in vain to plead for any further delay. I did not, therefore, say one word upon the subject, but came out, bidding them good night. I had a mile and a half to go, and I was an hour and a half in going. Sometimes I stood still and leaned against the hedge, begging the Lord to be with me and bless me in the work.

The following week I felt it my duty to name the matter to my father, as we were upon terms of friendship as father and son and in the things of God; so I followed him into his garden and said, "Father, I have something I wish to tell you." He inquired what it was. I replied, "Our minister, Mr. Warburton, and my friends at the chapel will not be satisfied any longer, but I must speak in the name of the Lord amongst them, and have fixed upon next Wednesday week for my first sermon." He turned from me, and walked away; his feelings overcame him, but, soon recovering

himself, he came to me and said, "You have not surprised me in what you have said, and I hope you are better taught than that anything I am going to say should make you vain. The thing is of God, and no doubt you will be raised up and made a blessing to the church of God in the ministry of the word." I inquired how he knew this, having never said anything to him upon the subject before. He replied, "Though neither you nor any other person in the world has named the matter to me, I have two reasons for being so confident; and the first is, I have been watching the dealings of the Lord with you both in providence and grace, the many trials and difficulties you have had to wade through, and the comfort and support you have had in the midst of them; in which I have observed a visible growth in experimental knowledge and acquaintance of the deep things of God, and the Lord has blessed you with ability to speak of those things, which you have handled of the word of life, with that feeling and savour which seldom falls to the lot of the Lord's people, except such as he has ordained to the work of the ministry. My second reason is, I have had such a spirit of prayer poured down into my soul for this blessing, and have at times had such nearness of access to the Lord in pleading with him for it, and have received such answers to my prayers, that I know the thing is of God. On one occasion, these words were applied to my mind with great power: 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' This gave me assurance that the Lord would bring it about in his own time and way. I felt it my duty to leave it with him, and not to name it to anyone, but watch the hand of the Lord in the matter. The time is now come. He will bring you forth and make you a blessing to his people." I was greatly surprised at what he said, not thinking that my dear father had, like his son, been wrestling with the Lord for the same blessing, and had received it by faith. This tended greatly to strengthen my hands.

As the time drew near for me to commence my labours I besought the Lord to give me a text, and that it might be one I knew something of experimentally; when he laid upon my mind these words (Ps. cx. 3): "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." I was enabled to give myself unto prayer and meditation, and felt some sweetness in searching the Scriptures to illustrate the doctrine

contained in my text. When the time came, I set off in the fear of the Lord, with my heart and eyes up unto him who made heaven and earth, to help me and be with me. I felt that none but he could; and to this day I feel that my help must come from the Lord. The language of David, in Ps. cxxi. 1, 2, has long been of great service to me.

I found the friends assembled, and began the service by giving out a hymn and with prayer, in which I felt much liberty and nearness to the Lord. When I had read my text, I felt such life, light, liberty, and power as I had never felt before, in speaking amongst our friends in our meetings together. The Spirit and power of the Lord God was upon me, because he had anointed me to preach the good tidings of a finished salvation to poor perishing sinners.

When the service was over, all appeared very serious and quiet. Not a word was said about the sermon in my hearing. It was agreed that I should preach again that night fortnight. Our minister previously told me that the principal evidence of a man being sent to preach the gospel was the power that attended the word spoken to the hearts of the people; but as nothing was said, I was left in the dark upon this point.

I set off home. There was a great fall of snow, which the wind blew and drove so vehemently that I had very hard work to get home. This was on the 9th of January, 1814.

The great thing with me now was to ascertain whether power had attended the word to the hearts of the people; but I knew it was not prudent for me to ask any questions as to my preaching. On the following Lord's day I heard a plain countryman ask how the preaching went on on Wednesday evening. Our minister replied, "It went on well, for it was not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." An old father in Israel added, "It was downright good preaching, and it did my soul good to hear it." This was a great help to me, as I had the testimony that I had been praying for.

When the time appointed for my second sermon came on, it was a wet night; and as I was preparing to set off, I found that my shoes were bad, and leaked. I said to my wife that I should be wet of foot before I got half way;

when she rather humorously replied that as the road and my shoes were so bad, and the night so wet, I had better stop at home till I got a pair of boots that would keep my feet dry. I replied, with the greatest confidence, that she would see the day, poor as we then were, that I should preach in boots, which came to pass.

My second text was Rom. viii. 14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I was enabled to speak with much freedom for half an hour, when all of a sudden I felt dark and straitened in my soul, and I said, "Friends, it has given over coming, and I feel quite fast and shut up; so I will give over. There is a saying that it is no use pumping when the well is dry." One of my friends, a farmer, brought a young gentleman with him to this preaching, who, till very recently, was an honourable and useful man in the town and neighbourhood, and he was so pleased with the plain, honest and simple manner in which I suddenly concluded my discourse, that he often said to my friends that he should never forget it, and that it was best to be like John Kershaw, to close the sermon at once when it gives over coming.

I should not have noticed this trivial circumstance but from the consideration that it may be useful to young ministers into whose hands it may fall. I have often heard people complain, saying, "If ministers would give up sooner it would be much better than hacking and stammering, repeating the same thing over and over again." It is much better to leave them longing than loathing.

On the very day I preached my second sermon our minister set off to supply the people at Trowbridge for six Sabbaths. Our deacons had requested him to send a supply from Manchester for the following Lord's day. At the latter end of the week there was a heavy fall of snow. On the Saturday, after dinner, my wife asked me to fetch her some water from the well. When I got there I found the well's mouth so covered with snow that I had to lie down on the ground in the snow to get the water. As I was lifting the water with a lesser vessel into a larger one, it was impressed upon my mind with great power that I should have to preach the next day, inasmuch as the roads would be impassable, so that no supply could come from Manchester. This impression I could not get rid of; so I began

to think of a text. I tried long, but could not get one to my mind. I had preached twice, and in these two sermons it appeared to me I had told the people all I knew; so that if I did preach, I was sure it must be the old thing over again. This caused me to labour that, if possible, I might get rid of such thoughts; but I could not. Still it would occur again and again that I should have to preach next day. About nine o'clock I left my work and went up into my chamber, and kneeled down before the Lord, entreating him that if I had to preach the following day he would not only give me a text but something to say to the people that would be for his honour and glory and their good. I told him that he well knew what a dark, ignorant, empty, destitute creature I was; that I felt, as it were, nothing but a mass of sin, weakness, and wretchedness. And as I was thus pleading with the Lord, these words dropped like refreshing rain into my soul: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Light, life, and power came with them. "A poor, empty, destitute sinner and a full Christ. Though nothing in ourselves but sin and weakness, everything we need treasured up in him, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, and that we should out of his fulness receive, and grace for grace." O the beauty and glory that I saw in Christ Jesus and his blessed adaptation to meet the poor needy sinner's case! I had a sermon before I got off my knees: "A lost sinner and a finished salvation; a naked sinner and Christ's robe of righteousness; a guilty sinner and Christ's pardoning love; a filthy polluted sinner and the fountain of Christ's blood to cleanse him from all sin; a weak, helpless sinner but strong in the Lord; a dark, ignorant sinner and Christ the wonderful Counsellor; a hungry sinner and Christ the bread of life; a thirsty sinner and Christ the water of life; a faint-hearted sinner and Christ the wine of the kingdom to cheer his drooping spirit." I both saw and felt that Christ Jesus is our "All in All." I wept for joy, and thanked his dear and blessed name for what I saw and felt he was to my soul, and for the text and sermon that he had given me. I besought him to be with me in delivering it to the people, and that he would be graciously pleased to make it a blessing to their souls. But where the text was was the next thing I thought of.

I knew it was in the Psalms, but I had no concordance; so I got my Bible and began to search until I found it. I doubled the leaf down, thanking the Lord, and then retired to rest.

Next morning I arose. It was a fine clear winter's morning; but the roads were filled with snow. When I got near the chapel, I met one of the friends. He said, "There is no minister come, and you will have to preach." Though this was what I expected, I felt all in a tremble. He took me into the house, when our old friend Mr. Niven came. I hope never to forget the kind, affectionate, humble, and encouraging manner in which he treated me. He said, "Now you see, in the providence of God, we are without a supply to-day. You have spoken twice amongst us, and the Lord has blessed both you and us in what you have been enabled to say. You must, therefore, as the Lord gives you ability, speak to the people to-day. I doubt not but the Lord will be with you in speaking, and with us in hearing, that we may be comforted together." He gave me his hymnbook, and asked me to find the hymns. I took it with a trembling hand, and, as the Lord would have it, opened at the 23rd Psalm:

"The Lord my Shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied.
Since he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside?"

These lines, as may be supposed, were a great encouragement to me. The old man took me into the chapel, and to the surprise of many in the congregation, I entered the pulpit of Hope Chapel for the first time, little thinking it was to be the place of my future labours. I opened the service with the before-mentioned psalm, read a portion of the word of God, and had much liberty in prayer. My text was Ps. cii. 17: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute," &c., and I was enabled to deliver my Master's message that morning with great solemnity, liberty, and sweetness. There was great attention paid to the word. Truly the Lord was with us to command the blessing.

The afternoon service was to come on, and I had neither text nor sermon. After dinner I sought the senior deacon, who, on former occasions, when disappointed of a supply, had gone into the table-pew, and read a chapter and

expounded it. I entreated him to do the same on that occasion. He replied in a very decided manner that the Lord had never designed him for the work of the ministry, and that he verily believed I was, and that I must do the work the Lord had called me called me to. I saw it was of no use to use any entreaty; so I took my hat and walked into the field adjoining the chapel amongst the snow, and cried to the Lord for help, and to give me something to say to the people; when he graciously brought a portion of the same psalm where my morning text was into my mind. The connexion being at the 25th verse: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture thou shalt change them." Then follows the 27th verse, which was my text: "But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The changableness of all created things, and an unchangeable God, were laid with weight upon my mind.

After a little meditation and prayer, I went into the pulpit again, and preached an unchangeable God in his covenant love, divine faithfulness, and almighty power. Service being over, I went to my tea to the friend's house where the supplies lodged. It being the day of the regular church meeting, I returned to the chapel as soon as I could. When I got there one of the friends was engaged in prayer. I thought they had contented themselves with a very short meeting, supposing it to be the concluding prayer; but when we arose from our knees, the business of the meeting commenced. I wondered what they had been doing so long previously. When they had finished, and one of the brethren was looking for a hymn, an old man said, "Before the meeting concludes, had we not better tell John Kershaw what we have been doing?" One of the deacons then addressed me as follows: "Before we commenced this meeting we had a conversation respecting you, and your preaching amongst us this day; and it is with pleasure that I tell you we are all as well satisfied as we can desire to be that the Lord has called you to the work of the ministry, and that the time is now come when you will have to go forth, and supply destitute churches. The clothes you have are not adapted or fit to be seen in the pulpit, and

we know you are in those circumstances which render you unable to buy others. We have therefore entered into a subscription, and the money is raised to buy you a new suit." I was greatly surprised at their kindness, and thankful to the Lord and to the friends for their readiness in supplying my necessity.

The same evening I spoke from 2 Cor. i. 3-6: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," &c. My reader will recollect that these were the words laid so powerfully and blessedly upon my mind on the memorable day the Lord assured me that he would put me into the ministry. And in speaking from them I felt something of the same sweet savour, life, and peace that I enjoyed on the above occasion, and I had abundant reason to believe the "doctrine dropped as the rain and distilled as the dew" into the souls of the people.

When our minister returned from Trowbridge, that the order of the church might be kept up, I was called upon to preach what is called a trial sermon. Such sermons are mostly preached before the members only; but instead of this, I was requested to take the evening service, and preach to the church and congregation. My text was 1 Cor. xv. 57: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

After service, the church was called together, and I was requested to retire whilst they deliberated. When I was called back, our minister addressed me in a very solemn and affectionate manner, telling me that it was the unanimous opinion of the church that the Lord had called me to the work of the ministry, and I had the best wishes and prayers of the people that the Lord's presence might be with me, and a blessing rest on my labours. Also, that I was at liberty to go and preach the gospel whenever the Lord in his providence might open a door for me, having his promise to rest upon: "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We were all much affected with the address. A hymn was then sung of Dr. Watts's, Book II., 45: *

"Thy favours, Lord, surprise our souls," &c.,

* Mr. Gadsby's Selection was not then published.

and our minister concluded with prayer, thanking the Lord for his faithfulness to his promises, in giving his churches pastors after his own heart.

It was soon known among the churches in Lancashire and Yorkshire that a young man had begun to preach at Rochdale, and doors began to be opened for me without any influence of mine. The first place I went to supply was Royton, where I continued to go once a month for some time.

The next place I went to supply was Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield. I set out on the Saturday, having fifteen miles to walk. Part of the road was over a high hill called Buckstones, a continuation of Blackstone Edge, the great range of hills that divide the counties of York and Lancaster. A heavy fall of snow came on, so that I had hard work to make my way. With some difficulty I reached the house of the deacon about dusk. He was from home, and I soon found from his wife, who received me very coldly, that another supply was engaged for the morrow. I assured her that the error was not mine, but that I had come according to order. I said, however, that as another supply was coming, if she would give me a night's lodging I would return home early next day. She agreed that I should stay and see the other deacon, saying that perhaps I might have to preach part of the day. I spent a miserable evening. The good dame with two servants was busy in the shop, serving the customers, and my work was to rock the cradle, which I did for five hours. When morning came, I still begged to go home, as they had another preacher, but she would not consent. After breakfast and family prayer, I took a walk on the canal bank, as I was in great anguish of soul. One person took particular notice of me, and seeing I was in great trouble, thought I was about to drown myself, and, consequently, stayed and watched me till I left.

At the time appointed, Mrs. Sykes and I set off to the meeting-house. Just before we reached it, the other minister passed us, and she informed me it was he that had to preach that day. When we got into the chapel, it was agreed that as there had been a mistake, and they had now two supplies, one should preach in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. I entreated them that if I must

speak amongst them they would let me get it over in the morning, as I was the younger man. This was agreed to. I went trembling into the pulpit, and opened the hymn book. It was Dr. Watts's, and as the Lord would have it, I opened to Book II., 77:

> "Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
> And gird the gospel armour on;
> March to the gates of endless joy,
> Where thy great Captain Saviour's gone." &c.

My soul arose within me. All my fears fled, and valour for the honour and glory of the Lord and zeal for the peace and prosperity of Zion came upon me. O what an amazing change took place in my feelings in the course of a few moments! I was suddenly brought out of a world of misery into a world of joy and peace. I opened the service with the above hymn, and found sweet liberty in prayer. My text was Rom. viii. 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" The love of Christ was blessedly shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; and as I spoke of it the people felt it too; so that I saw tears of joy trickling down the cheeks of the old pilgrims who had long been travelling Zionwards. It was a time to be long remembered, and has often been spoken of.

After service, the other minister, who was to have preached in the afternoon, came and took me by the hand, saying, "My friend, you have begun the labours of the day, and shall finish them; for I will most gladly be a hearer again this afternoon." He went with me to dinner, and when we got into the house Mrs. S. might not have been the same person. Her countenance shone with delight, and she received me with her whole heart. From that day to the day of her death we had a growing attachment to each other in the bonds of the gospel. She was as valuable a woman as I have ever known in the county of York, both as a wife, mother, mistress, and friend. As a Christian she was a bright jewel in the Lord's house. The cause of God and truth lay near her heart. Her husband survived her many years, and was an occasional and acceptable preacher of the gospel. He is now numbered with the dead, and at his particular request I buried him and preached his funeral sermon in 1848.

The person I have alluded to, who was so fearful I should drown myself, heard me preach. He was greatly astonished when he saw me go into the pulpit, and at the great change he evidently saw had taken place in my spirit and countenance; so much so that before he left the chapel he went to one of the old members and told him all the circumstances of the case.

The minister who should have preached in the afternoon was my old, true, faithful, and valuable friend and brother Charles Lodge, of Lockwood, with whom I walked in real spiritual soul-union till his death. I have often counted it an honour and esteemed it a privilege to sit and be taught by him. I have in sweet remembrance the last conversation I had with him in the presence of some of his most intimate friends, in which he gave a most blessed account of the Lord's gracious dealings with him, of his call by grace, his deliverance from bondage, and being brought into gospel liberty; his call to the ministry, and many things connected with it. He particularly requested me to bury him and preach his funeral sermon. His desire was to be buried at the Old Baptist Chapel, Lockwood, where the Lord first met with him, and where also he was brought into the sweet liberty of the gospel; and there he wished his body to lie until the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. This request was attended to. At his funeral many friends came from a distance, and, as with Stephen, "devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." On the occasion, after reading suitable portions of the word of God for the edification and comfort of relatives and friends, I spoke from I. Thess. iv. 13: "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." After the interment, the friends and ministers walked together to the vestry and school-rooms of Rehoboth Chapel, where the deceased had been a member, and where tea was provided. On Lord's day morning, October 31st, 1852, I preached his funeral sermon in Rehoboth Chapel, from Rev. xiv. 13, to an attentive congregation. I have heard my friend Mr. Gadsby say that in all his extensive acquaintance with the people of God he did not know a man who was better able to open up and expound the Scriptures in Christian conversation than his friend and brother Charles

Lodge; but in preaching his utterance was frequently too rapid to be well understood, which was a great drawback to his usefulness in the ministry. "The memory of the just is blessed."

A short time before I went to preach at Slaithwaite, I was one day sorely tried in my mind. Family circumstances were very distressing, fretfulness and peevishness worked very powerfully in my soul, and, like poor rebellious Jonah, I was ready to say, "I do well to be angry even unto death." Like Ephraim, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, I kicked and plunged until, as Moses did, I spoke unadvisedly with my lips. O what misery did I feel in my poor soul that day! When night came, and the time it was usual for me to go into my closet for secret prayer, I trembled at the very thought of appearing before the Lord. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, began to buffet me, saying it was a most wicked piece of presumption in me to attempt it: and for awhile I durst not. I, however, felt it was both my duty and privilege to be instant in season and out of season; so with a trembling hand I opened the chamber door, and my knees smote together as I went upstairs. I fell down before the Lord, and began to tell him what a guilty, filthy, polluted, rebellious wretch I felt myself to be. Whilst thus confessing my sins and sinfulness, I felt my hard, rebellious heart begin to soften, and tears of contrition flowed from my eyes; so that I offered to the Lord the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which he hath said he will not despise. Whilst engaged in telling the Lord what a poor vile creature I was, he began to tell me what he was, saying, "I am the Lord, and change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." "Ah, Lord," I replied, "it is of thy mercies that I am not consumed, and because thy compassions fail not; and great is thy faithfulness." I felt such a sweet humble giving up of myself to the Lord that body, soul, and circumstances, I could now leave in his hands. I felt him to be sweet and precious to my soul. I could now feelingly say with Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" &c. I felt that I was "more than a conqueror over sin, the world, death, and hell, through him that hath loved me." This was a time of refreshing to my soul. Bless the Lord, who can make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. I came downstairs as happy and comfortable as I could desire to be.

If all the free-willers in the world were to tell me that God's immutable love shed abroad in the heart of a poor sinner by the blessed Spirit leads to sin, I am a witness for God against them. It humbles the soul, enlarges the heart, causes the feet to run with a sweet and solemn pleasure in the way of God's commandments. What I felt at this time was the substance of my first day's preaching at Slaithwaite.

From this time I began to go to Slaithwaite once a month, and many a toilsome journey I had over the long and tedious moors, sometimes wet through, as if I had been immersed in a pool of water. At this time there were six miles on one part of the road with only one house, which was a public-house, and a den of thieves. I called occasionally, not knowing the character of the house, to get a little refreshment, and sometimes shelter from the storm. The people were always very kind and civil to me, especially the mistress of the house. She was a Scotch woman, from Glasgow, and from what she told me it appeared that her first husband was a God-fearing man. I had a bad opinion of her second husband. One night I dreamed that he followed me, and took my watch and the little money I had. This greatly increased my fear, insomuch that afterwards I often turned round in the road to see if he was following me. Thus, like the apostle, I was in peril of robbers. In this house a desperate gang of robbers had their rendezvous. They had a horse shod with leather, which they took with them in the night to carry away their plunder. At length they were apprehended. The landlord turned king's evidence to save his neck; but several of the gang were hung at York.

On one occasion, whilst walking across these moors, I was caught in a dreadful thunderstorm, and not a living creature near me but a few sheep. Like Moses and the children of Israel, when at the foot of Mount Sinai, I exceedingly feared and quaked. "What an awful thing," thought I, "it would be if I should be killed in the storm, as both man and beast often have been." I was led to examine the ground I stood upon for eternity. As a poor guilty sinner, I saw my need of the dear Redeemer and his finished salvation, and a giving myself up into his blessed hands, and I had such a precious view of him by faith that all my fears fled away. I knew that the thunder was the voice of my heavenly Father. I had such a confidence

given me of my safety and security in Christ Jesus that I was as happy as I had just before been miserable, and descended from the great moors, singing :

"Should storms of sevenfold thunder roll,
And shake the globe from pole to pole,
No flaming bolt could daunt my face,
For Jesus is my hiding-place.

"On him almighty vengeance fell,
That must have sunk a world to hell.
He bore it for a chosen race,
And thus became their hiding-place."

On another occasion, passing over these moors, I was lost; there came on a dark thick fog, so that I missed my way, and soon became so confused that I could not tell which way to set my face to go right. I wandered about for some time in great agony of mind, fearing that if night came on before I could find my way I might lose my life. While thus filled with terror and dismay, I heard the voice of a shepherd and the barking of his dog, which gladdened my heart. I called to him, and told him I was lost. He spoke kindly to me, and inquired where I was going, and from whence I had started; when to my surprise he told me that I was within a few yards of the place I started from in the turnpike road, which I left by a footpath, being a much nearer road. How thankful I was when the shepherd put me right. I walked along, thinking of my lost state and condition as a sinner, and of the good Shepherd finding me upon the dark mountains of sin and iniquity, and of his showing me my lost ruined state by nature, and the distress I was in when I could see no way of escape. I was led also to think of the joy and gladness I felt when Jesus said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Soon after I began to preach, the Lord opened a way for me into different parts of the Forest of Rossendale, where I went once a month, till I was settled over the church at Rochdale, and where I have gone occasionally ever since.

There have been two churches planted, one at Bacup and another at Goodshaw, as the effect of my ministerial labours. Many a rough journey have I had into Rossendale over Rowley Moor, sometimes wet through with rain, at other times up to the knees and loins in snow, labouring in it till

the sweat dropped off me and I was nearly out of breath, and had to rest before I could proceed.

I well remember on one occasion it snowed and drifted so violently, and I toiled till almost ready to faint, so completely was I exhausted, that I was brought to a stand, nearly up to the middle in snow. After resting awhile, I became quite easy, and felt exceedingly drowsy; but just as I was about to fall into a deep sleep, it came powerfully into my mind that if I fell asleep I should be smothered in the snow and lose my life, as I had heard of others having done. This gave me fresh vigour. I exerted my remaining strength, and, through mercy, got off the moor safely. I was not to be lost in the snow, as my work was not done. The Lord be praised for his goodness.

On another occasion, going over the same road on a fine Lord's day morning in May, I met two well-dressed men; they bade me "Good morning." I returned the salutation, and passed on. I had not gone more than a few yards when I heard them call out. I turned round, when one of them said, "If we are not mistaken, we have heard you preach at Newchurch." I told them I had preached there. "You are a Calvinist, and we are Arminians," one of them said, "and if you are willing, we will try which is right." I took out my watch and said, "It is now half-past nine o'clock. I have to preach this morning at half-past ten, and have yet three miles to walk. It will not be right for me to stop disputing in the road, and disappoint the people where I am going. They inquired when I should be at Newchurch again; they would meet me there, and argue the point. I informed them that I should, God willing, be there again that day month.

When the time came, they brought one of their preachers to argue with me. The place in which we met was crowded with people. I opened the business by recapitulating the circumstances, and then called upon my opponent to state the principle that he wished to be discussed. He then proceeded as follows: That he believed Christ laid down his life and shed his blood for the sins of all Adam's fallen race, and that life and salvation were offered to all men; so that they might all be saved if they would. I then asked him if I was to understand by his statement that he believed Christ Jesus had satisfied the demands of God's holy, just, and

righteous law for all and every sin of all and every individual of Adam's fallen race? He said, "Yes." I then asked him to tell us upon what ground it was that any were condemned and sent to hell? He said, "For the sin of unbelief." I replied, "If Christ died for every sin of every individual of Adam's fallen race, he must have died for the sin of unbelief too; so that it still remains for you to prove upon what ground any are lost." This question he could not answer, and was evidently confounded, but his pride would not let him confess it. He tried to shift his ground; but I would not allow it till he had solved the question before us. I told him I would explain it to the present assembly by a metaphor, with which they would all be familiar, and leave them to judge. "If," said I to my opponent, "I owed you fifty pounds, you would have a right to demand your money; and if I was insolvent, and could not pay you, you could, according to law, throw me into gaol for debt. But if, while thus confined, a friend of mine came forward unsolicitedly to pay my debt and obtain your receipt in full for all demands, this proceeding, both according to law and justice, would secure my deliverance. Neither law nor equity could detain me for a debt that had been honourably paid." I remember when I said this a plain straightforward countryman called out, "It would not be morally honest to detain you; but be acting the part of a rogue." I then continued, "As sinners, we are debtors to the law and justice of God. Our Lord uses this figure (Luke vii. 41) in speaking to Simon concerning Mary Magdalene: 'There was a certain creditor had two debtors.' Christ is the great paymaster of all his people's debts. He paid the ransom with his own blood; so that the declaration is gone forth, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.' And again, Jehovah the Father, having received satisfaction at the hands of Christ for the sins of his people, says (Zech. ix. 11): 'As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.' Christ must see of the travail of his soul, surrounding his throne in glory, or he will never be satisfied. Justice neither can nor will demand two payments for one debt, first at the bleeding Surety's hands, and then again at ours. So that not a soul that Christ shed his precious blood for shall ever perish." The pride and stupidity of my opponent were such

that he professed to say he could not see the force of my argument and the word of God upon which it was founded. The people separated, saying that he was fairly and honourably defeated; but the pride of his heart would not allow him to confess it.

About the time I entered the ministry, the old Presbyterians in Rochdale openly avowed their principles to be those of the Unitarian heresy; and so zealous were they to advocate and spread those doctrines that they put out printed notices announcing the different subjects that would be discussed in Blackwater Street chapel on such and such evenings for several months to come. The doctrine of hereditary depravity was the first, and this occupied two evenings. In this discussion I took no part, but cannot forget the bitter scorn and contempt thrown out against this doctrine and the Assembly's Catechism, in which it is so prominently and scripturally set forth. The second subject was the doctrine of the atonement. I felt little inclination to attend, being grieved at the enmity I had seen manifested against the truth of God at the two previous meetings. But when the time came, I saw numbers going, and felt a wish to hear what they would say on this subject. The chapel was crowded to excess, so that many had to sit on the edge of the pews. When the business commenced, I felt no desire to take any part in the discussion; but when I heard such contempt poured upon the precious blood of Christ, as the redemption price for the sins of his people, like Paul at Athens my spirit was stirred in me. The word of the Lord was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones. I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay. As soon as I opened my mouth and began to speak, the living family of God that were present afterwards said that they felt the power of God was upon me and the word spoken by me; and I felt it too. The Lord made good his promise: "I will give thee a mouth and wisdom which all thine adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." So completely confounded was my principal opponent (a Mr. G., of Bury), that he begged time to reconsider the subject till the next month. This request was granted. As may be supposed, there was great anxiety and desire on the part of many that I should attend the next meeting; but our minister and my old friend Mr. Niven wished me not to go any more amongst

them. As a young man, I felt it my duty to obey the exhortation: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." My opponent was in appearance much like Goliath, and I had much of the appearance of the stripling David; so that the cry went forth that David had slain him that defied the armies of the living God. This was very galling to the enemies of God's truth, but very pleasing to the lovers of the truth. I know that my defence of the truth at that time was of God, for the Lord stood by me and strengthened me in it.

This circumstance brought me more into public notice in the town and neighbourhood than anything I had previously done; and, although it is now fifty-two years since, it is talked of to this day, and will be as long as any of the persons live who were present.

It might be interesting to some of my readers to hear the arguments and portions of God's word by which I was enabled to confound the adversaries of God's truth; but this would swell my narrative, and be rather a digression.

Some time after this public discussion, I was returning home, on a dark Sunday night, over Rowley Moor, having been preaching in Rossendale, when, on the road, I fell in with one of the Unitarian preachers who was present at the discussion just referred to. I cannot forget the difficulty we had to get home. There had been a keen frost, and it was now thawing; so that we could scarcely stand upon our feet, it was so slippery. I well remember that he put this question to me: "Well, friend Kershaw, you and I have both been preaching to-day in Rossendale. Now do you believe that you are called and moved by the Holy Spirit of God to preach the Gospel?" I said, I hoped and trusted I was; for if I was not I had no right to go and preach the word of life to poor sinners. He then honestly and unhesitatingly declared that he knew nothing of such an influence, neither did he believe in it. That religion which denies the Godhead of our Saviour, the efficacy of his precious blood as our redemption and fountain to cleanse us from our sins, and which discards the Person and work of the eternal Spirit, is cold and dead. It leaves no groundwork for our souls to rest upon, but the sandy foundation of our own works; and all who build upon the sand will most assuredly fall; and great will be their fall. (Matt. vii. 27.)

The first time I went to preach in the Forest of Rossendale, I was taken to the house of Henry and Betty Hoyle, of Newhouse, near Rawtenstall, a couple far advanced in years. There is a short and interesting account of them in Mr. Gadsby's Memoirs. They received me with their whole heart and soul. As there was no preaching in the immediate neighbourhood which they could hear with satisfaction, they gladly opened their door to my ministrations. I went on a Lord's day once a month for two years, until the death of Mrs. Hoyle, and the old man died shortly after her. This godly couple, like the Shunamite woman, had a chamber, a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick devoted to the Lord's prophets for fifty years. Mrs. Hoyle was effectually called by God's grace when she was very young. What is justly denominated a law-work was very powerful in her soul. She was so wounded with the terrors of the law and the burden of sin that it wore down both her body and mind; so that she was laid upon a bed of affliction. Her medical attendant, parents, and friends feared she was in a consumption, and near the gates of death and the grave. The Lord, in his own time and way, heard her cry, and brought her up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set her feet upon a Rock, and established her goings. That precious portion was sealed in her soul by the Holy Spirit: "And the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Henceforth to the day of her death she was rooted and grounded in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. She often said she had heard much talk about "high and low doctrine;" but her maxim was that a poor sinner could never have too low views and feelings of himself, nor think too highly of a precious Christ; as we could never err in ascribing all the honour and glory to the Lord. She was indeed a mother in Israel. They were possessed of considerable property, and lived upon their own estate; but scorned to hoard up the riches of this world, using only what was needful for the body, the residue being used to promote the cause of God and relieve the wants of the poor. She was indeed like Phebe, "a succourer of many and of myself also." Many happy days and nights have Mr. Gadsby and I spent with these people. Every time I went on a Lord's day there was a gathering together of the outcasts of Israel, and I have reason to believe the Lord blessed the word to their souls

These were indeed joyful days to her; for she loved the truth, and the brethren for the truth's sake. It gladdened her heart to see such numbers attend to hear the word. She was at length afflicted with a cancer in her breast. Her sufferings were very great, but the Lord was with her to comfort and support her; so that her end was peace. I preached her funeral sermon to a large and attentive congregation in Clough Fold Chapel, where she had formerly been a member for many years, from a text she gave me: "And ye are complete in him, who is the Head of all principality and power." (Col. ii. 10.) Her dear husband also, like David, delighted in the everlasting covenant "ordered in all things and sure;" for it was all his salvation and desire. The seed of the word sown on these occasions by Mr. Gadsby and myself was not in vain, but has sprung up; and as the effect thereof a church has long since been planted at Goodshaw Fold; and where we both preached many times.

The summer after I entered the ministry, the Lord opened a door for me at Bolton, where I preached in King Street chapel once a month, until they gave me a call to become their pastor; after which I was requested to go every fortnight for six months, that I might have time to consider the matter, and beseech the Lord to guide and direct me in the decision. The congregation increased; several were baptized and added to the church; but I could not see my way clear, as it respected moving my family to Bolton. The more I thought and prayed over it, the more darkness I had upon my mind concerning the affair; so that at length I was obliged to answer their kind invitation in the negative.

MR. WARBURTON'S REMOVAL TO TROWBRIDGE.—SUPPLIES AT ROCHDALE.

About fifteen months from the time I commenced preaching, our minister, Mr. Warburton, left us and went to Trowbridge, where he ended his days and valuable labours. As a church we were then left in a very destitute state. Many who were greatly attached to him feared we could not carry on without him, and our enemies hoped and even said, "The cause would come to nought, and the chapel have to be sold." For a time things wore a very gloomy aspect, and we were obliged to carry on with supplies. One William

Leather, a member of the church at Manchester, was our principal supply. He came once a fortnight, and another minister and myself were appointed to make up the deficiency, but the Lord knows how I begged and besought our deacons to get others in my place, and allow me to supply at their places in the meantime. The opposition I felt against preaching at home I cannot describe. Every Saturday night before I had to preach at Rochdale I could take little rest, sighing, groaning, and crying, expecting that this preaching at home would quite overcome me, and I should soon be pumped quite dry. Often have I got up on the Sabbath morning and wandered in the woods and fields, crying to the Lord, so faint and sickly that I felt it hard work even to take a cup of tea and a mouthful of bread before I set off. When the minister preached, who came once in the month, I had to supply his place at Royton; but it often happened that he was unwell and could not come; so that on the Friday or Saturday I received a note from him, saying he was poorly, and was obliged to stay at home and I must take his place at Rochdale. What sinkings of heart have I experienced on these occasions; for I had abundant proof of the truth of our Lord's words (Matt. xv. 37): "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house." When I have entered the pulpit, I have seen some leave the chapel; others would come to the doors, and when they saw me in the pulpit or heard my voice would turn back. Not that they had anything against my character or the truth I preached, but the idea: "It is only poor John, who has been brought up among us, whose father and mother and brethren we know." So it was with my blessed Lord and Master in his ministry. (See Matt. xiii 54 to the end.) These things sometimes sorely tried me, and I longed to get away; at other times I was greatly supported, and enabled to bear it with patience, knowing I had not taken the office upon myself, but like Aaron was called of God. Those who found so much fault were not the members of the church, but hearers only; one of whom, who considered himself of some importance, said to the deacons, "If John is to be the preacher, you'll soon see where you will be. You will not be long before you will have to close the chapel doors." None of these things, however, moved the church. They still stood fast by me, as a minister of Jesus, believing

that the Lord had indeed called me to the work, and that he did and would bless me in it, to the souls of his own people.

During this period, Mr. Leather, our principal supply, turned to what is called Sandemanianism, and began to preach this new doctrine in our pulpit. For a time this change caused great confusion amongst us. During the week after he had preached his new doctrine, and before I heard a word about it, the Lord laid the following words upon my mind so powerfully that they did not leave me: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 30.) I wondered what this could mean, as I had no thoughts of Mr. Leather falling into such an error. It was my turn to supply at home the following Lord's day, and I was much tried in my mind on the Saturday for a text. I toiled all day in prayer and supplication that the Lord would lay some portion of his word upon my mind that he would make a blessing to the souls of the people. Late in the evening the following words were brought sweetly and powerfully to my mind: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. vi. 14.) I was first led to describe the character that gloried only in the cross of Christ, namely, the poor sinner who, like Solomon, had seen and felt the emptiness, folly, and vanity of all things below the sun; like David, had seen an end of his own perfection, because God's commandment is exceeding broad; and who, like Paul, had felt the law brought home into his soul by the power of the Spirit; a knowledge of sin had revived, and he had died to all hope of saving and helping himself by works of righteousness that he either had done, or ever expected to do. Such, and such only, are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. The things that were gain to them they now count loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and him crucified. In whom, like Paul, they glory. I had great liberty in exalting the sin-atoning Lamb as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of the salvation of his chosen people, putting away all their sins by the sacrifice of himself, removing the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us, giving us the victory over death, by

being its plague and destruction, opening up the way to heaven, through the rent vail of his flesh, and ever living to intercede, and plead our cause, and manage our affairs. The knowledge of these things, by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, is the boast and glory of the Church on earth, whose language and soul-feeling is with the apostle in our text: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The cross of Christ is also the glory of the church triumphant, and for ever will be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

This day's preaching had a wonderful effect. After service in the afternoon, the deacons called the church together, and declared, as officers of the church, they would stand by and support such a ministry as they had been hearing that day; but they would set their faces like a flint against the new-fangled doctrine Mr. Leather had preached the Sabbath before. Mr. Niven stood up and said he would never support, either with his presence or purse, such a ministry as they had the previous Sunday; adding, "The preaching of this day is the joy of my heart and comfort of my soul, nor can I sanction any other." The result was, a letter was sent to Mr. Leather, informing him that his services were no longer desired. This was acting according to the word of God: "If there come any unto you that bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houses, neither bid him God speed." Paul also exhorts to "give no place to error, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

Immediately after these things took place, our old friend Mr. Gadsby came over, and entered a solemn and faithful protest against the errors broached among us. This helped us much. There were a few, but principally among the congregation, who were carried away with these new things —chiefly those who were disaffected towards me. They invited Mr. Leather to preach in their houses, and at length hired a room for him, where they met every Lord's day for a time. Shortly, however, it came to nought. Not long after, two of the principal men amongst them fled to America, where

many that have been disaffected towards the British constitution and the order and discipline of the Lord's house have gone as their last refuge to hide their folly and shame. These men had previously given Mr. Warburton a great deal of trouble and did all they could to plague us whilst in the neighbourhood. But the hand of the Lord went out against them. In them I saw the fulfilment of that text: "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper," &c.

Should these lines fall into the hands of any who are fighting against God's truth, the discipline of his house, or his ministering servants whom he hath set for the defence of his gospel, let them take warning, and remember that the Lord hath said (Zech. ii. 8): "For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye." It is also recorded in Ps. cvi. 16, 17: "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram." None ever fought against the Lord, his truth, ministers, and people, and prospered.

Mr. Leather gave Mr. Gadsby and the church at Manchester a great deal of trouble, and they had to separate him for his errors. He afterwards joined a people who held the same views as himself, meeting in Coldhouse Chapel, Manchester. He has been dead many years. I heard him preach often; but never received a crumb of the bread of life under him. He was a learned man, a Greek and Hebrew scholar; but he was a dry breast to me.

MY SETTLEMENT OVER THE CHURCH AT ROCHDALE.

From this period, the church began to have their eyes upon me as their future pastor. The Lord was evidently blessing my labours amongst them. Five persons came forward to declare what God had done for their souls; and as my ministry had been the means in the Lord's hand of bringing them forward, the church agreed that I should baptize them. This was a sore trial to me, as I knew there would be a great crowd of people, and I feared lest I should not be able to go through the work with honour and credit to the Master's cause. Many were my sighs, groans, and prayers that I might have the Lord's blessing and presence with me in the work. When the time came, the chapel was

crowded to excess. The spirit and power of the Lord that I had prayed for came mightily upon me; so that, being raised above the fear of man, I was enabled to go through the work in a manner that gave great joy and satisfaction to my friends, whilst enemies raged, and sent me scurrilous anonymous letters, of which I took no notice, knowing that the Lord was on my side. This tended greatly to increase the desire of the church for me to become their pastor, though they prudently concealed these intentions from me, until they heard I had answered the call from Bolton in the negative.

I well remember, as I was returning from Bolton on one occasion, I called upon our oldest deacon, who proposed to accompany me a little on my way. He inquired if I had given up all thoughts of going to settle over the people at Bolton. I told him I had. He then said there had been a church meeting, and he was deputed to tell me it was the unanimous intention of the church to give me a call. He wished me to ponder the matter over in my mind, as the church would proceed in the business. When we parted my mind was filled with amazement. What to do or say I could not tell. On the day I was supplying at home, a special church meeting was called. I went in amongst them, not knowing for what purpose they met. After singing and prayer, I was requested to withdraw. I walked about in the garden, full of thought and prayer that the Lord would direct both the church and myself. When I was called in, the deacons told me it was unanimously agreed to give me a call to become their pastor. I entreated them to do nothing hastily, but allow me to supply three Lord's days out of four for six months, and for all of us to make it a matter of prayer that we might be guided and directed right in an affair of such great importance, and to watch and see if the Lord would bless and be with us during that interval. Our esteemed friend Mr. Niven said he very much approved of what I had said. So my proposal was unanimously agreed to.

From this time I was greatly concerned to know the Lord's will concerning me in this matter. It was uppermost in my mind, both day and night. The Lord poured down into my soul an earnest, fervent, wrestling, persevering spirit of grace and supplication, that I might be guided and directed by him to do that which would be for his honour and glory and the good of his church. The more I thought

of and prayed over it, the more my heart and soul were knit to the people and the place. In the first place, I felt that, as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, I was the property of the great Head of the church. In the second place, as a member of the church of God in this place, I had been raised up from amongst them, and in this capacity I was their property. I was thus led sweetly and solemnly to give myself up to the Lord and to the church of which I was a member, to labour amongst them in word and doctrine so long as it was deemed by them desirable, and my labours were made a blessing among them. In proportion as these feelings increased, I became more reconciled and comfortable in preaching at home, a burden which before time had been so intolerable. The Lord had wrought so great a change in my feelings that instead of, as heretofore, labouring to get away, I longed to stay, as my heart and affections were with the people, and I felt assured the Lord had put it into their hearts to invite me to become their overseer and pastor. He put it into my heart "to take the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;" "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." So powerfully was this impressed upon my mind that I felt it both my duty and privilege to abide at Rochdale; and ever afterwards, not all the afflictions I have had to pass through, nor the many calls to larger places and greater salaries, have been able to move me, though there have been many struggles for it. The conclusion I was enabled to come to I kept entirely to myself, watching the hand of the Lord, and soon found the affections of the people were growingly towards me.

During the six months' trial, I felt great liberty and freedom in preaching, and that the Lord was blessing the word. We had many sweet and precious seasons which, both to the people and myself, were tokens for good, that the hand of the Lord was with us.

The six months being expired, the church made it known that they were growingly attached to me and my ministry, and that they were more and more desirous that I should become their pastor. I then felt it my duty to disclose my sentiments on the subject; how the Lord had often impressed it upon my heart that I was his servant, and that, as a

minister, I was their servant for Jesus' sake ; and that therefore, according to their desire, I would serve them in the ministry with whatever ability he might be graciously pleased to grant. Thus it was mutually agreed, there not being a dissentient voice, between the church and myself, that I should become their pastor.

I commenced my labours amongst them, as their settled pastor, the first Lord's day in March, 1817, when I preached from Ps. cxviii. 25 : "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." I had great sweetness and liberty, and the people heard the word with gladness, whilst I was led to show wherein consisted true gospel prosperity as sent by the Lord. The call which they gave me was signed by every member of the church, and they expressed great joy and thankfulness to the great Head of the Church, in giving his churches pastors after his own heart (Jer. iii. 15), and for raising up from amongst themselves one so unlikely, "that the excellence of the power might be of God and not of man."

PROVIDENTIAL TRIALS AND DELIVERANCES.

At the time of my settlement we were only about twenty members. Many who had been opposed to our late minister had been excluded. The congregation was but small, and many of them exceedingly poor. We had six hundred pounds of chapel debt, and five pounds per year ground-rent ; and, as my wife was a fruitful vine, we had four children that could neither provide for nor dress themselves. Our agreement respecting money matters was, that when the interest, ground-rent, &c., were paid, I was to have the rest, and the house rent free ; but it very soon evidently appeared to all that we could not live on so small a sum, it being little more than twenty pounds a year. We were greatly distressed, and at times had little food in the house. I did not like to plead poverty, nor borrow money when I had no prospect of paying it again, and thus bring a reproach upon the cause. The Lord only knows what we had to pass through. When at the last extremity, these words were brought to my mind : "Be still, and know that I am God." The power and blessing that attended them were such that I felt persuaded the Lord would appear for us. And so it proved ; for, shortly after this, the church was called together,

our circumstances taken into consideration, and it was mutually agreed that I should have the whole of the pew-rents; the interest of the debt and ground-rent the people agreed to raise among themselves.

There are two or three circumstances which took place before I left Lower Fold that I would record to the honour of God's great name, in which his mercy and providential goodness were clearly made manifest towards us. On one occasion, we were aware that an increase of family would take place about the time of rent day. My wife and I talked the matter over, and were determined, if possible, to lay a little up against that time; but this we soon found it was out of our power to do. Provisions were daily rising in price, and wages lowering; so that, with all I could get at my regular work, and the little I had for supplying the different places I went to, we had hard work to procure food, to say nothing of raiment and rent. The nearer the time and the darker the cloud. O the sighs, and groans, and wrestlings that I had! Here was plenty of work for faith and patience. In the midst of my trouble the following lines were a great help to me:

"Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

And again:

"The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

The comfort I received from this hymn, and especially from the above lines, I hope never to forget.

A few days before the May rent-day our little one made its appearance. We had little food in the house at the time, and where the three pounds just due for rent could come from I could not tell. I knew that many of my neighbours, amongst whom I had some bitter enemies, were looking on, the latter expecting that I should not be able to pay, and it would have rejoiced their hearts to see me distrained upon for the money. I was greatly concerned for the honour and glory of my Lord and Master, fearing lest I should bring reproach upon his cause, which I felt dearer to me than my life.

On the Saturday night, as I was on my knees pleading with the Lord to be with me in preaching his word, I heard the door open, and some one come in. Immediately I heard

the person's voice, it was impressed upon my mind that deliverance was at hand. It was one of our deacons, who had come into the village upon business, not knowing the distressed state we were in. When he left, he requested I would accompany him a little on his way, and asked me several questions about my affairs, but said nothing of his intentions. After service on the Lord's day afternoon, he called the church together. I went into the vestry with the rest of the members, but was requested to retire to a friend's house. Before tea, Mr. Niven and the good man of the house came in, laying down on the table the amount of rent and something more; so that I was enabled not only to pay the whole, but to buy what was needful for the present to make my wife and family comfortable. I blessed and praised the Lord for his goodness, who had indeed proved the truth of the lines just cited:

"Behind a frowning providence," &c.

It was Monday morning before I returned home, having to preach that evening three miles from Rochdale. When I pulled out my money and counted it before my wife, she wept for joy to see the goodness of the Lord thus pass before us in the way.

Tuesday was the rent-day. My neighbours and their wives who lived under the same landlord set off to feast at his table. I well remember, before they set off, some of them passed my door several times, looking in very scornfully to see if there were any signs of me going; and as none were visible, they went away, smiling at the thought that I could not go. Had I not gone, it would have been a subject of conversation upon which some of them would have delighted to dwell. After they had been gone some time, I followed them, and, to the satisfaction of my landlord, the grief of my enemies, and the joy of my heart, I paid the rent, thanking the Lord for his providential goodness.

A short time before I removed my family to Rochdale, we were in great distress for want of food. On one occasion I had been supplying in Yorkshire. I returned on the Monday with ten shillings, six of which we had to pay for coals, which left four shillings only for six persons to live upon a whole week. To make the most of it, we bought some oatmeal, and had porridge for breakfast and supper

only. This left nothing for dinner. I felt much for my wife, she having a child at the breast, and was often so faint for want of nourishment that her constitution became greatly injured, the effects of which she long felt.

On Wednesday morning the postman brought a letter from my Manchester friends, which, though but short, was very acceptable, as the following homely composition will show :

"Dear Brother in the Lord,—Understanding that you are in trying circumstances, your Lord and Master has put it into our hearts to make your thin pottage into thick ones. That is, to send you a good load of oatmeal for that purpose. You must, therefore, look out amongst the Rochdale carriers for it.

"Yours in the Lord,

"George Greenhough."

This letter filled my mind with wonder and thanksgiving. The high price of provisions at this time was such that a load of meal cost four pounds, which can now be bought for thirty shillings. The Saturday afternoon after, I went to our friends, where our supplies lodged, and showed them my letter. As the husband knew the carriers better than I did, he went with me to enquire. We went from place to place, but none had heard anything about the meal. My friend, seeing I was discouraged, said, "Come, cheer up; you shall not go home empty-handed." Going into a butcher's shop, he bought me a good-sized piece of meat, with which I returned a little more cheerful. When I got home, I found my wife looking at a note which she said a neighbour carrier had brought along with a piece of bacon. The note was as follows :

"My dear Brother in the Lord,—'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' That is to say, the meal is not ready, and we have sent a piece of bacon to relish the potatoes until the meal comes. You must look out for it on Tuesday.

"Yours in haste, truth, and love,

"G.G."

Like Manoah and his wife, we looked on with wonder at the providential goodness of the Lord in providing for us.

At the beginning of the week, like the poor widow of Zarephath, we thought all would be eaten up; but, through

the Lord's goodness, we had now twenty-five pounds of good meat in the house, and the meal came on Tuesday. None but the tried family of God can tell the blessed effect such unexpected deliverances have in the souls of God's tried people.

On the following Lord's day I was enabled to speak very encouragingly to the poor of the flock who were in temporal want and privations, assuring them of their heavenly Father's care for them, that he knew what things they had need of, and was able to supply all their wants, both temporal and spiritual.

On the Sunday morning after the carrier had brought the meal, he went, as usual, to get shaved. The house was the Sunday rendezvous of many of my ungodly neighbours, whose practice was to ridicule and make sport of me and my religion, though I never came near to nor meddled with them. When they began their usual practice of reviling me, he said, "Neighbours, I have often heard you laugh and make sport of John Kershaw, saying, 'What with reading his Bible, praying, and following after religion, he has gone crazy;' but you may depend upon it he will prove himself the wisest man amongst us in the end. I have brought him a quantity of provisions, and I was surprised at the kind inquiries that the senders made concerning him when they found I knew him. Depend upon it, he will leave us all behind, and rise in spite of all opposition. I begin to see he has that in him and about him that cannot be kept down." On hearing this they became clothed with shame.

ENEMIES MADE AT PEACE.

In a few weeks after this, the Lord in his providence removed me from amongst them. My nextdoor neighbours were my greatest persecutors, especially the man's wife. The enmity of this woman's heart against me and my family because of my religion I cannot fully describe. She would often laugh me to scorn as I passed her door, and tauntingly call my children bad names, allowing hers to beat and abuse mine, which, as may be supposed, annoyed my wife exceedingly. When she saw me set off on a week evening to the prayer-meeting, she would run and tell her neighbours that they might join with her in abuse. Instead of retaliating, the Lord enabled us, in some measure, to

pray for our enemies, and to do good to them that despitefully used and persecuted us. When we had been gone from Lower Fold a few years, to our great surprise, this woman began to come to the chapel. My wife opened our pew door for her, and she continued to sit with my family. In a while, she not only came on a Lord's day, but began to attend the Wednesday night prayer-meeting. Though she had nearly two miles to come, a dark night did not prevent her. It was evident that the Lord had begun the good work of grace in her soul. She had gone to most of the churches and chapels in the town to get some good to her soul, as she called it, but all in vain. She sank deeper and deeper in wretchedness. At length she was compelled, from real necessity, to come and hear the man she had so much despised and persecuted. The Lord evidently blessed the word to her soul, which constrained her to esteem me highly in love for my work's sake. When she felt her feet fixed upon the Rock of Ages, and the sweet love of Christ shed abroad in her heart, she was constrained to come forward and make a public profession of her faith by being baptized and joining the church. She had now to prove the truth of our Lord's words: "And with such measure as ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The persecutions she endured from her husband were very great. He was a well-read man of Unitarian principles, and, like Saul of Tarsus, breathed out threatenings against her. When these would not keep her away, he often beat her severely; and when he found that beating would not do, he locked up her clothes. But none of these things kept her away from the house of God. He then threatened to kill her if she would not cease going to Hope Chapel. She told him she was commanded not to fear them that kill the body, but were not able to kill the soul; but rather to fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The more she was persecuted the brighter the grace of God shone in her, and she proved the truth of the promise: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days thy strength shall be." Some time afterwards her husband died, and left her with several children. She was much tried in her circumstances, and was forced to remove to Manchester, in order to procure work for her children. She then began to sit under the ministry of Mr. Gadsby, and became acquainted with some of the people

who had a love to her as a saint of the most high God. Having been brought up in the country, Manchester did not suit her health. The smoke and fogs of that place soon impaired her constitution, and she was brought to the brink of the grave. As she lay on her death-bed, some of the friends visited her. She expressed a great desire to see me. I was written to, and accordingly went. Before I had been five minutes in the room with her, my soul was so blessed with what she said that I felt myself amply repaid for going. I spent some time with her in conversation upon spiritual and eternal realities, read a portion of the word of God, and spoke to the Lord in prayer.

We had a very affectionate parting, with the impression on our minds that we should not see each other's face in the flesh any more, which proved true.

My landlord had a very keen eye, as it respects money matters, but was strictly honest in his dealings. He lived upon his own farm, and was a manufacturer of flannel, and was looked up to as one of the first men in the neighbourhood. I had, from a boy, to go every morning to his house for milk. When it pleased the Lord to call me by his grace, he saw such a visible change in my outward deportment that led him to make some inquiry as to the cause. The account I gave did not suit him, the ground he was on being like that of the young man in the gospel, who came to Christ inquiring what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life. My ground was that of being saved by grace, the effects of God's everlasting electing love. The enmity of this man's heart against the doctrine of election was amazingly great. Morning after morning, for a considerable period, as opportunity served, he was always for arguing the point, and being frequently foiled, he was stirred up to read his Bible, and to consult his friends of the same school, in order to get a fresh supply of arguments against the truth of God. I had read Elisha Coles and my Bible very attentively, and had felt a little of the importance of the truth in my own soul; so that the Lord gave me "a mouth and wisdom which the adversary was not able to gainsay nor resist." I well remember that on one occasion he was so much staggered that he very angrily said, "How long is it since you began to think of these things?" I replied, "About two years." He asked me if I could tell him how it was that I

should have more understanding of the scriptures than himself, who had been professing religion, reading, and studying his Bible long before I was born. I told him that I knew well how it was; but he being an old man, whilst I was but a lad, he having known me from a babe, I did not want to grieve him. He said, "Grieve or not grieve, tell me how it is." "I can assign no other reason," I replied, "than the words of our Lord (Matt. xi. 25): 'In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'" This quite confounded him, insomuch that he never opened his mouth, and it settled all our disputes. Before this time, when his sons saw me coming, they would take their seats to be ready to hear the controversy. His eldest son is still living, more than eighty years of age. I called to see him a short time ago. Whilst I was there, a neighbouring clergyman of the Church of England called, and he related to him what I have been recording, and referred to the portion I have cited; and said he well remembered that his father was confounded and could make no reply. The clergyman said he had heard of these things several times, and thought he should like to see me and have some conversation with me. From this time he has always been very friendly.

When the time came that my friends, particularly Mr. Niven, would have me to leave Lower Fold and live in the house adjoining the chapel, I felt determined not to leave without paying my rent. I had not the money, nor did I like to borrow. Mr. Niven, however, found it, and my landlord expressed himself highly pleased to find his house clean and in good condition. He also said he was sorry to part with me as a tenant, and boasted of my conduct to the neighbours. Though he did not like my doctrine, he was pleased with my behaviour towards him. From this time he was always friendly, and sometimes would come to the chapel to hear me. One of his sons is of the same age with myself; we were play-fellows together. He was, in a moral point of view, a much better lad than myself. He never went to the same lengths of sin, and was far more dutiful to his parents and regular in the means of grace; but God, who has mercy on whom he will have

mercy, plucked me as a brand from the fire, whilst he still remains in the same state of unconcernedness about his soul. I never see him but the following words come to my mind: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

"O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be."

The Lord says by the prophet Jeremiah: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

It is with pleasure I record that a grand-daughter of my landlord's, prompted by curiosity, came to our chapel to witness the ordinance of baptism by immersion. The Lord so sealed home the word preached and the administration of the ordinance to her soul that she came again and again, and eventually joined us, wore well, and made a blessed end, leaving as her funeral text Jude 21: "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

In the first week of March, 1817, we removed to Hope Chapel House. Leaving a country village, where I had been brought up, for the town, was in some respects a trial to me. We had very little furniture, and the little we had was very mean, too much so, we thought, for the house of a minister. Our apparel also, and especially the children's, was very scanty, hardly fit to be seen where persons are expected to appear what the world calls respectable. However, we were obliged to appear with such as we had, though mortifying to our pride. The Lord remembered us in our low estate, and raised up friends, particularly a Mrs. Potts, a niece of Mr. Niven's. She being now dead, I can speak the more freely of her. She greatly assisted us, and seldom came empty-handed, and we soon began to make a more comfortable appearance. What this excellent woman did for my predecessor, John Warburton, and his family, as well as for mine, is worthy of being recorded as a memorial of her worth. She joined our church in the June after my removal to Rochdale, and was a great blessing to us, so long as she remained. They were North Britons, and the family removed to Scotland, where she died on the 29th Nov., 1849. "The memory of the just is blessed."

After I commenced my pastoral labours, the word was much blessed, and for some months things went on tolerably well. In September of the same year, Mr. Littlewood, the Baptist minister of whom I have before spoken, died. Immediately after his death, Mr. Stephens, of Manchester, began to supply. They gave him a call, which he accepted. The cause, at that time, was very low; several matters, combining together, caused this declension, of which it is not necessary that I should speak in this memoir.

After Mr. Stephens came, the chapel began to fill, the pew-rents were doubled, the poor who had free sittings under their former minister were told that they must give them up, or pay for them. Such was the demand for seats. As might be expected, several of our congregation, who were prejudiced against me, "being a prophet in my own country," left and went to hear this new minister, who was so much exalted; but not a member left us. Some of his hearers said we should have to shut up the chapel, as we never could carry on the cause,—a poor weaver with a family of small children for their minister, a heavy chapel debt, but few members, small congregation, and those mostly poor; while their chapel was free from debt, many of the congregation rich, a growing church, a learned, talented, and influential minister. They no doubt thought those we had would leave us and flock to them; so that our chapel must inevitably be closed. Yea, the cry went forth that Hope Chapel was going to be sold. Under the circumstances, our deacons, at times, began to have their fears and misgivings whether or not we should be able to stand our ground and meet all demands, and my unbelieving heart echoed these fears. O the sighs and groans and fears that were working in my mind, both day and night, and the great searchings of heart that I endured! I felt sure that I had not put myself into the work of the ministry. I had neither worldly influence nor human learning to carry me through. I had nothing to look to for success in the work but the almighty power of Him who had called me to it. For months together I was in great agony of soul, wrestling in earnest fervent prayer and supplication for the power of the Holy Spirit to rest more abundantly upon me and the good word of his grace in the souls of his people, that sinners

might be converted and saints comforted and edified, and that the Lord would keep me in his fear, so that my conduct and conversation might be as becometh the gospel of Christ.

In the midst of these exercises and misgivings, I spoke of them to dear Mr. Niven. His reply was, "Let us pray to the Lord to bless and prosper our friends in Town Meadows (the chapel in which Mr. Stephens preached), so far as they have the honour and glory of the Lord, the purity of his truth, and the peace and prosperity of Zion at heart; and if their chapel become so full that it will not hold them all, perhaps some that cannot get seats will come up to ours." (I hope never to forget the earnest and solemn manner in which he spoke the following words): "But whether the Lord will bless them or not must be left to himself. This I know, that he will us; for I have had such a spirit of prayer given me for you as a minister, and for us as a church and people, and have felt so much of his power and presence with us in the means of grace, such answers likewise to prayer in reference to you and your ministry among us, that I know he will bless us in the midst of all the opposition we may have to meet with. What we have to do is to study to be quiet and mind our own business, pray for his presence and blessing to be with us, and leave our cause in his hands; and it will be made manifest that the Lord of Hosts is in our midst, and that to bless us." What he said was a great encouragement, coming as it did from the lips of such a gracious, God-fearing man; yet I did not feel as though my gracious Master had spoken them unto me; so that I still cried unto him that he would give me some kind assuring word that he would make bare his arm and command a greater blessing upon my labours. Though I was but a stripling in person, and mean and poor in circumstances, he had given me zeal for his honour and glory; so that at times I was like a bottle ready to burst, there being nothing so near and dear to me as the Lord's honour, and Zion's peace and prosperity.

One day, walking alone, pondering these things over, the following words dropped into my soul: "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) All the circumstances connected therewith came at once to

my mind, how that Samuel was sent by the Lord to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king, and he requested all his sons might be brought. When Eliab, the firstborn, appeared, he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me." Eliab, it seems, was like Saul, tall and good looking, his countenance fresh and comely; but the Lord said unto Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Then Jesse caused Abinadab to pass before Samuel; and he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this. Again, Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." No doubt Jesse would be ready to say, "Surely it cannot be my son David, who is the youngest, and but a stripling, whom the Lord intends to be king over his people Israel!" As soon as Samuel heard the name of David, the spirit and the power of the Lord came upon him, assuring him that he was the Lord's anointed; and he said, "Send and fetch him, for I will not sit down till he come hither." When he came, the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." From this circumstance I saw clearly that the Lord neither looked on outward circumstances nor human abilities, but at the heart; and to the joy of mine, I found it was indeed right with God. The great things the Lord had wrought for and by his servant David, his slaying Goliath, and subduing all his foes, were great encouragement to me. I knew that young David's God was my God, that his ear was not heavy that he could not hear, nor his arm shortened that he could not save.

From this time I lost my fears that we should not be able to carry on the cause of God and truth at Hope Chapel. Many more encouraging portions were brought to my mind with great power; such as: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "More are they that be with us than all that be with them;" "With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and fight our battles;" "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty;"

"Once have I spoken, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto the Lord." What the Lord wrought by the poor ignorant and unlearned fishermen, as recorded in Acts iv. 13, was also a great encouragement to me. I had now faith to believe that his blessing would more abundantly attend my labours. The conclusion the apostles came to was powerfully impressed upon my mind: "But we will give ourselves continually unto prayer and the ministry of the word." Thanks to the Lord, this has been my practice during all the course of my ministry. The following portion was often upon my mind, and I was enabled to obey it: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, knowing not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good." The Lord soon made it manifest that he was working with, and by me, confirming the word with signs following. In a while, some who had left came back, and settled down among us. A few who came before the church, in giving a reason of the hope within them with meekness and fear, spoke of the great prejudice they had felt against me because of my birth and low circumstances; but the power of the Lord so attended the word spoken by me to their souls, that "as the north wind bloweth away rain," so had the preached word in the demonstration and power of the Spirit blown away all these fleshly feelings, and they confessed with tears the hard and bitter things they had felt and said against me. This greatly strengthened my hands, and was a great encouragement to the church. Some of those who belonged to the other chapel, both from the church and congregation, began to meet with us; but what was more astonishing, the two old deacons who had been as pillars in the other church in the days of Mr. Littlewood, left the place, giving up the church books, moneys, and all other affairs they held as deacons and members, and joined us; and several more of the members joined also.

On March 5th, 1820, I baptized ten persons, nine men and one woman, and the same day we received four from the other church, making an addition of fourteen to our number. This caused a great stir amongst the professors of religion. Whilst these things were working, like Manoah and his wife I was looking on with wonder and astonishment at what the Lord was doing amongst us.

From this time our church and congregation greatly increased. The bottom part of the chapel was without pews, except the table pew, the rest being benches; the walls also in the bottom had only one coat of plaster, with the marks of the trowel left upon it, looking rough and comfortless. One of the deacons and his wife who had come from the other church were persons of property, and they proposed that the walls of the chapel should be finished, and they would find the money. It was mutually agreed that not only the walls should be finished, but that the chapel should be thoroughly repaired, whitewashed, painted, and every other thing done that was needful. So the work commenced, and at one of the meetings of the committee of management the above named deacon stated that, as the congregation was upon the increase, and the seats in the gallery mostly occupied, whilst others were wanting pews, he should like us to put the pews in the bottom of the chapel. My old friend Mr. Niven opposed this, being unwilling to increase the debt we had already on the place. Our new friend replied, "You and I are able to put the pews in ourselves, without asking any one for a farthing; and it will never hurt us." "My dear friend," said Mr. Niven, "I am glad to see the spirit you are of, and your willingness to support the cause; but the church has been owing me sixty pounds for several years, and for which I have never received any interest, neither do I ever intend to do. Now, if you will advance me half of this, and let it lie without interest till paid, then my pound to yours, either in giving or lending, as long as you like." Our friend begged pardon for pressing him on the subject, not knowing that the church owed him anything, and then further said, "If it be agreeable, I will pew the middle of the chapel at my own expense."

I should not have recorded this circumstance, but that I cannot forget the Christian feeling and hearty affection that ran through the whole of these proceedings. These gracious, God-fearing men have now been dead many years. The Lord incline the hearts of his people who possess this world's goods to obey the exhortation: "Go thou and do likewise."

The chapel and congregation now began to assume a very different appearance. Persons who would scarcely

have turned their heads to look at me now began to notice me. The professing world wondered how it was that I got on so well, seeing that I had never been trained up for the ministry in an Academy. Others said that I had been well taught and trained for the work, by the old Scotchman, Mr. Niven. This was very true; for the dear old man of God was unwearied in instructing me, both literally and spiritually.

A CONTROVERSY.

My reader will naturally be led to inquire how it was that so many left the church over which Mr. Stephens was pastor. The reasons they assigned were because they could not profit under his ministry. He opposed what is commonly called a "Law-work" in the conscience of the sinner. He would not allow that the Holy Spirit made use of the Law in convincing of sin before Christ Jesus was revealed as a Saviour by faith; nor was it true conviction nor godly sorrow that was felt before Christ was enjoyed as a Saviour. He told his people that John Bunyan began with the Christian too soon, that his Christianity only commenced when he came to the foot of the cross. So according to this doctrine, he was no Christian when he fled from the City of Destruction, and was directed by Evangelist to enter in at the strait gate, nor while passing through the Slough of Despond, and standing trembling at the foot of Mount Sinai, nor when directed by Evangelist to the house of the Interpreter, where he was shown such wonderful and interesting things. Contempt also was poured upon the invitations of the gospel as belonging only to the characters described therein; viz., such as "labour and are heavy laden, the poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst after righteousness," &c. These are they to whom the invitation is given: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." There must of necessity be an adaptation between the thirst and the waters, *i.e.*, the spiritual thirst wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, and the spiritual blessings called waters, treasured up in Christ Jesus, "The Fountain of living waters." Doubts and fears

respecting their personal interest in Christ, of which the Lord's family are, at times, the subjects, were discarded as not belonging to the experience of a Christian. The many exhortations to "Fear not" in God's word had reference merely to things temporal and not spiritual. Hence the Christian was said to have no darkness upon his mind in reference to his spiritual state, and that when he walked in darkness and had no light, as in Isa. l. 10, this was only in reference to temporal affairs. I well remember one gracious man, who is still alive and our oldest deacon, coming to join us. In telling why he came to us, he said, when he went to the chapel, cast down and distressed, feeling the plague of his own heart, the temptations of Satan, and the providential difficulties he was exercised with, he was directed to the Law as his rule of life. He was told to live up to his privileges, and he would be happy and comfortable, and if he was not, it was his own fault. Thus the gospel, with its blessings, was applied to the unconverted, Gospel pearls given to the swine, and the children's meat given to the dogs.

Mr. Stephens preached and published a sermon from 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." This sermon caused a great sensation amongst the people. Mr. Gadsby, at that time, was coming amongst us once a month, on a Monday evening, and saw the distress these new doctrines caused amongst the living family of God, and he felt it his duty to reply, in the form of a printed letter, to which he gave the following title: "Sandemanianism Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting." This letter had a very extensive circulation, and was made a great blessing.

Mr. Stephens's moral character was excellent, and his mind strong and firm. He sometimes preached election and predestination, and in the same sermon pulled all down he had been setting up, as is the case of too many at the present time. He first united with the Independents, and was settled over a people in Yorkshire. From thence he went to Edinburgh, where he became a Baptist, and for a time was very popular. From Scotland he went to London, to succeed the venerable Abraham Booth, the well-known author of "The Reign of Grace." From London he removed to Manchester, and from Manchester to Rochdale,

in the autumn of the year 1817; so that we were contemporaries for nearly twenty years. His deacons and so many of the people leaving him was a sore trial that he never could get over, and he always laboured to shun me and keep me at a distance; but I was often requested to visit his people when sick, and I also preached in some of their houses; and when we made an effort to liquidate the debt on our chapel, some of them sent us money unasked for. Before his death the cause got very low, and the leaders of the place, with many others, were weary of him; so that he resigned his charge, and shorly afterwards died at Rochdale.

DEATH OF MY FATHER.

In the former part of my narrative I have had to make frequent mention of my dear father. Seven of the last years of his life he sat under my ministry, and witnessed the things I have been narrating. The old man looked on with wonder, and was constrained to say, "What hath God wrought!" He never joined the church, but went in and out as a hearer, never interfering with the affairs of the place. He associated with a few, in particular with the two old deacons who came to us from the other church, and was much esteemed amongst the people for his meek and quiet spirit. His death was very sudden, and to me very trying. The last Lord's day he attended with us it was very wet. After service I met him, and said to him I was afraid he would get sadly wet before he got home. He replied, "I shall;" and then turned round, saying, "If you have not a sufficient number coming foward to assist you in teaching the children in the Sunday School, I will come down and help you." Smilingly, I said, "Do go home, father, an old man 77, and never think of becoming a teacher at your time of life." He smiled and went away. I little thought it would be the last time that I should see him alive. Thousands of times has he been on my mind as we parted that day. The occasion of his speaking to me was, I had been requesting some more of the friends to come forward, and assist us in the teaching. The old man's heart being alive to the work, he showed his willingness to do what he could. He usually came to the market, which is

held on Monday, and never failed to call on us. This time I did not see him. It was a very rainy day; so that in going home he got wet through. On Tuesday night I dreamed that my father was dead, and that I could not attend his funeral, having to preach at Halifax on the day of his interment. I was in great anxiety, not knowing whether to preach according to my previous engagement, or follow my father to the grave. As I was deliberating, these words were powerfully impressed on my mind (Luke ix. 60): "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." My grief was so great that I wept aloud, like Joseph when he saw his brethren. This awoke my wife. She aroused me, inquiring what was the matter. On relating my dream, she made light of it, and fell asleep again. The result, however, proved the truth of the following words: "For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in the vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." (Job xxxiii. 15.) The next day my elder brother came and told me that he had intended to go to Oldham; "but I dreamed," said he, "that my father was dead." It had such an effect on his mind he could not set off until he had been to see him. He found him very ill in bed, and he believed the old man would never come out again alive. I inquired if he was not likely to live a few days, or perhaps weeks. He said he might. I was not able to go to see him that day, as my old friend Mr. Warburton, from Trowbridge, had just come in that morning. The next day I had to visit Hebden Bridge, and attend the funeral of an intimate friend, who had died very suddenly. Here I was to have stayed all night; but anxiety about my father caused me to return immediately after the funeral. I walked thirteen miles. When I got to the town I called upon my friend Mr. Niven. Inquiry was made if I was aware of my father's sickness. I said I was, and should not have returned that night, but I was anxious to see him, and intended to go next morning. Mr. Niven then said, "I am sorry to say your father is dead. I was walking out this afternoon, when a man came to me and said, 'Your minister's father is just dead. I was told it as I came past the

door.'" I was so affected I could not speak, but went home, when my wife told me she was with him when he died. I will not dilate on my feelings at this period. They are the common lot of humanity, and too well known to need describing. The Tuesday following was fixed for the funeral, and being the day I had to preach at Halifax, the same struggle was again roused in my mind I had felt during my dream. "What shall I do?" was now the painful inquiry. Natural affection prompted me to stay at home, and see my dear father buried. On the one hand, my relatives and friends all said, "It would be most unseemly to go into Yorkshire until after the funeral." On the other hand, I knew that if I did not go it would be a great disappointment to some hundreds of people, some of whom would have to come many miles to hear the word of God. The word sounded again and again in my ears and soul-feeling: "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." What Peter said also to the rulers of the Jews was powerfully impressed upon my mind: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." This settled the matter in my own mind. I knew if I stayed at home I could be of no service to my dead father; but if I went and preached the kingdom of God to poor sinners, the Lord might make me a blessing to their precious souls. The day came, and as I went down the chapel yard the gravedigger was beginning to open the grave. It is not in my power to describe my feelings as I passed by, and walked on full of anguish until the mail coach overtook me. It being full outside I got in, glad that I was the only occupant. I think I may safely say that I was chief mourner, though I sorrowed not as they that have no hope, believing that he was landed safe in glory. I also felt thankful to the Lord for enabling me to obey his directions in going to preach the kingdom of God. All the way my soul was much engaged in prayer, that I might have the Lord's blessing and presence with me.

I had to preach two nights. Before reading my text, I told the people the peculiar circumstances under which I had come amongst them, which had a very seasonable effect upon their minds. I was greatly assisted in preaching both nights. The word had free course and was glorified. Many were the signs that followed.

My reader may inquire as to the state of my father's mind. All that I can say is that a sudden stupor seized him, and he lay mostly asleep, so that he could hardly reply to anything. On being asked where he wished to be buried, with some difficulty he replied, "At Hope Chapel." These were the last words he was able to speak.

GRACIOUS TESTIMONIES.

THE funeral that I had to attend, which I have previously alluded to, was on account of the sudden death of a true friend, named John Evans, of Lilly Hall, near Hebden Bridge. This man of God was the instrument in the Lord's hands of introducing me into many parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire. He commenced coming to Rochdale to hear Mr. Gadsby on a Monday evening, after which he came on a Lord's day, and cast in his lot amongst us. He invited me to preach at Lilly Hall, where I went regularly once a month for some time. People flocked to hear from many miles round. People from Halifax invited me to go there; and when at Halifax, some came from Bradford and invited me there. Thus a way was opened for me to Leeds, Huddersfield, Bransley, Clayton West, Morley, Batley, Dewsbury, Gomersall, Bingley, Cullingworth, Haworth, where that man of God Grimshaw laboured so abundantly, Northoram, where the persecuted Oliver Heywood laboured, preaching in the chapel that was built for him after his expulsion from the Church of England. I used to go my Yorkshire round once a month, leaving home on a Monday and returning on the Friday. The labours I have had in these places and the persecutions I met with for several years I cannot forget. Ministers not only shut their pulpits against me, but did all they could to prevent the people attending. Notwithstanding all persecution, threats, and in some cases excommunication, the people both did and would come to hear, especially the old and tried ones, who sat and starved under the ministry of most of the young men whose academical education had not imparted that power and spirit whereby the children of God grow and thrive. The strange things I have seen and heard amongst them would fill a volume. My itinerant labours in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, for some years were so abundant

that I injured my health. An acute rheumatic fever seized me, during which time Mr. Gadsby took one of my Yorkshire rounds. When he returned, he said he did not wonder at my being sick, for the travelling I had in Yorkshire was enough to kill a horse.

This illness left a weakness, especially in my right leg, so that afterwards I could not endure so much fatigue. Before this affliction overtook me, I had such excellently good health and use of my limbs I was able to walk with the best I met with. The rougher the road, and the fouler the weather, the greater my spirit for weathering the storm. When travelling by coach in these northerly parts of the country, it was usual for passengers to walk up the steep hills. On these occasions I was one of the first on the summit. The first time I went into Yorkshire after my illness I was somewhat mortified; for ere we got to the top of Blackstone Edge, first one and then another passed me, so that I was left by myself. This so affected me, I remember, that I wept in the road, because I could not, as formerly, be amongst the foremost. Gradually my leg began to strengthen, and since then I have walked thousands of miles without much inconvenience; and such has been the general state of my health that I have never been kept out of the pulpit on a Lord's day, except during this illness, and then only for two Sabbaths. My pains were so acute that I had no rest day or night, and often murmured and repined, until the Lord was graciously pleased to break into my soul, and made all my bed in my sickness; so that my meditations of him were sweet. The tenth chapter of John was very precious to my soul. I knew that I was one of his sheep. I had heard his voice and followed him, through evil report and good report. I felt assured that he had given me eternal life, and this life was in me as a well of living water. My soul was fed as with marrow and fatness. The twenty-eighth verse was most precious: "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands." The first Sabbath I went out I preached two sermons from the above text. Though with great bodily weakness, spiritual strength and power were in my soul. I fully realized what the apostle John testifies in his first epistle (i. 1): "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have

looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life." These words: "And they shall never perish," were so impressed upon my mind that they followed me with a divine sweetness for a long time after; and even to this day, when I have quoted them in defence of the blessed doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, I feel a little of the same enjoyment I had at the above time. How true it is

> "The marks of that celestial seal
> Can never be erased."

The sermons I preached from this verse were so blest to the souls of the people that some of them wished I would publish them; but I had such a mean opinion of myself that I dared not attempt any such thing.

On one occasion, preaching at Halifax with great liberty and enlargedness of heart, I was enabled to exalt the sin-atoning Lamb upon the pole of the Gospel, in the glory of his Person, as the God-Man and Mediator, in the perfection of his work in the salvation of his people, in his offices and characters, relationships, &c., as being so blessedly adapted to meet the case of a poor sinner. When I got to the bottom of the pulpit stairs, a venerable-looking old man came to me, took hold of my hand with both of his, looking me steadfastly but affectionately in the face, and he repeated the following lines:

> "Join all the glorious names,
> Of wisdom, love, and power,
> That ever mortals knew,
> That angels ever bore;
> All are too mean to speak his worth,
> Too mean to set my Saviour forth."

With emphasis he added, "And so art thou, too, my lad, and thou doest thy best. And God bless thee in it." I responded to this from my very heart and soul, content to be nothing that Christ might be exalted. This circumstance left a savour upon my spirit I never read nor repeat the above precious lines, but I think of my old Yorkshire friend.

The first time I went to London I preached several times in the pulpit and chapel where Dr. Watts laboured. One Sabbath evening, when preaching in this chapel from Eph. iii. 8: "The unsearchable riches of Christ," I had great liberty and enlargedness of heart in exalting a precious Christ and his unsearchable riches. When I had said all I

could, both language and bodily strength failing me, the above circumstance came very forcibly to my mind, and in the conclusion of my sermon I told what the old Yorkshire-man had said to me, which produced a very good effect, as was evident from the cheerful countenances of the large and attentive congregation.

On another occasion, preaching at Halifax, I was led to speak of the "sheet knit at the four corners," let down from heaven to Peter, when in a trance upon the house-top (Acts x. 11), as being typical of the covenant of grace and salvation in which are all God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, as set forth by "all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air," and alluding to God's elect in their unregenerate state. Here I particularly noticed that all who were let down in the sheet were taken up again; none were put in, nor any taken out. So with God's elect. They were all safe in the covenant; neither men, sin, nor devils can pull one out, nor universal charity put one into God's covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, with all the blessings it contains for all the spiritual seed. A lady who heard this sermon felt much discouraged. She was persuaded of the truth, but feared she was not in the sheet. When she returned home, Satan, the great adversary, harassed her mind by saying, "True enough, all are safe who are God's, but you are not one of them. It is of no use to pray, to read, or go either to church or chapel; for if you are not already in the sheet, all your prayers, tears, or good deeds can never put you in the covenant of grace and salvation. This is true, and you know it. Give it all up. You are nothing but a castaway; and there remains nothing for you but a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Thus she was tossed all that night. Sleep departed from her, and the following day a gloom was on her countenance visible to all the family, who wondered what could have happened to distress her. The second night, too, was passed without sleep, in sighs and groans, until her husband entreated her to tell him the cause; but she could not, though she assured him affectionately that it arose neither from him nor any connected with them. The second day was spent in the same distressed state as the former. The third night she retired in the

same or greater distress than before, body and mind quite worn down almost at the last extremity; when she was led to reason thus: "What am I and what have I been all the days of my life but a guilty, sinful, polluted wretch? What demand have I upon the Lord to save and bless me? My conscience testifies that had he marked my iniquity, and dealt with me according to my sins, I must have been cut down long ago, as a cumberer of the ground. If I am saved it must be of the Lord's mercy, irrespective of anything in me or done by me. I will give myself up into the Lord's hands, and if I perish I will perish at his feet." (How true it is that the Valley of Achor is for a door of hope. See Hos. ii. 14, 16.) She was now led to look to the free, sovereign mercy and love of God which flowed sweetly into her soul. The blessed Spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was an object of the everlasting electing love of God, and that she was in the sheet knit at the four corners. Her mourning was turned into gladness. She wept for joy until, nature being exhausted, she fell asleep. She awoke in the morning with the same joy in her feelings, and she went down stairs with a cheerful countenance. Like Moses when he had been communing with the Lord, her face shone, so that the change was visible to all the family. She went about her household affairs singing psalms and hymns, making melody in her heart to the Lord. The next time I went to Halifax I was invited to her house to tea, when she related to me the above things, still rejoicing with David in the well-ordered covenant of grace and salvation.

In another of my visits to Halifax I was invited to preach in Mr. Cockin's chapel, a large Independent chapel called Square Chapel. Through the influence of some of his deacons and friends, Mr. Cockin gave consent, and it was published far and near. Before the time came, there was a meeting of ministers in Halifax, when a Baptist minister, who had professed some friendship towards me, preached in my pulpit, and slept at my house, brought the subject forward, declaring that I was an Antinomian, and ought not to be admitted into any of their pulpits. The result was Mr. Cockin had to apologize to his friends to whom he had made the promise. This was a great grief to many, both amongst the Independents and Baptists, who loved a free-

grace gospel. From this time the hand of the Lord went out against my opponent. His wife died, he was left with a family of small children, and in many things he acted very imprudently; so that his friends deserted him. In his last affliction he was in great want, and a minister who, like himself, was in disrepute, went about to beg for his support, and even for means to bury him. After his death his orphans had to go to the parish.

But to return. Another chapel was provided for me, in which I preached to a large congregation from Ps. lxix. 29: "But I am poor and sorrowful. Let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high." The Lord clothed the word with power; it was like bread cast upon the waters, seen after many days. Many have been the signs that followed the preaching of the word on that occasion, so that I rejoiced that though I was shut out of the synagogue, they could not shut the word of the Lord out of the hearts of the people.

At another time, after preaching at Wheatley, near Halifax, a gentleman who professed to be benefited by the sermon gave me a sovereign, saying he hoped I should come again soon, and he should come and hear me, as he hoped to have a second benefit. The next time I went I preached from Acts vi. 4: "But we will give ourselves continually unto prayer, and the ministry of the word." The time following, my Halifax friends told me that the young gentleman who had previously given me the sovereign was an only son, and that his father designed him for the Church of England, and that he was preparing to go to the college. He had bought many books which were thought needful to prepare him for the ministry, also that he heard my last sermon, upon ministers giving themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and that under that sermon he was convinced that he was wrong in attempting to go into the ministry, as he did not possess that grace which Paul speaks of: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. iii. 8.) His conscience testified that the power and Spirit of the Lord had never come upon him to anoint him to preach the gospel. The many things brought forward in that sermon had such an effect upon his mind that he gave up all thoughts of going to college, and the next day went

to a bookseller and sold all the books he had purchased with a view to the ministry, and henceforth turned his attention to mercantile pursuits; which it would be well for many more to do, instead of entering into the ministry, considering it a respectable calling, or as the Scripture saith, "that they may eat a morsel of bread;" such being what our Lord calls "blind leaders of the blind," and, if grace prevent not, both the leaders and the led will fall into the ditch of eternal perdition. (Matt. xv. 14; Luke vi. 39.)

On one occasion I was invited to preach at Keighley during the holidays in Whit-week. A friend was to meet me with a horse, on the road between Keighley and Halifax. One of my friends lending me a horse for two days, the man had the pleasure of riding back on the horse he brought for me. Before I left my bed-room in the morning, according to my usual practice, I kneeled down to thank the Lord for his manifold mercies, and beseeching him that his presence and blessing might be with me through the day. I told him that he knew that I was going to a place I had never been to before, and besought him to give me a text to speak from, that he would make a blessing to the people whom he in his providence might bring together; when the Lord laid upon my mind Rom. viii. 30: "Whom he did predestinate," &c. From the power and savour that attended the words, I felt this was to be my text, and thanked the Lord for it, beseeching him to be with me in preaching, and bless it to the souls of the people. As the man and I were riding together, he said, "You will have to preach this afternoon at three o'clock in a large Wesleyan chapel, and you will have many people to hear you, Baptists, Independents, and Wesleyans. They are coming for miles round." On hearing this I at once thought of my predestinarian text and the Wesleyan chapel. Flesh and blood, carnal reason and the devil began to work powerfully on my mind. As we rode along I laboured to get another text, that I could preach the truth from, without coming so decidedly against the system of free-will. But no text could I get. O how wretched and miserable did I feel, until the Lord brought to my mind what had passed between him and me in the morning, when I told him that he knew where I had to preach, and who I should have to hear, and that he gave me the text in answer to prayer. I was ashamed of myself that I should endeavour

to give way. Many portions of the word of God flowed into my mind, such as: "If I seek to please men I should not be the servant of Christ," with more of the same import. Before we entered the town, my mind was delivered from these fleshly feelings and the fear of man, and a valour sprang up in my soul for "the truth of God upon the face of the earth." (Jer. ix. 3.)

When the time came, there was a great gathering of people. Before reading my text, I addressed them as follows: "It is the practice of some men, when called to preach where they have never been before, to inquire what the sentiments of the people are, and labour to accommodate their sermon to the palates and views of the people. This is not obeying the command of the Lord in separating between the precious and the vile, the chaff and the wheat, faithfully dispensing the word of the Lord, fearing no frowns and courting no smiles. When I look around me at this congregation, it strikes my mind that were I disposed to act the above part, I should fail in attempting to please all, for I have no doubt I have persons before me of various opinions; so that while I was seeking to please some, I should offend others. My desire is to seek to please the Lord, and preach the preaching he has bidden me. I therefore call your attention to Rom. viii. 30: 'Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.'" This precious portion of God's word the old Puritan divines called the golden chain. Speaking of the first link, predestination, the second link, effectual calling, the third justification, and the fourth glorification. When I came to the last link, vindicating the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints unto eternal glory, proving it from many portions of the word of the Lord which are the joy and rejoicing of my soul, the last two verses of Toplady's hymn, which begins:

"A debtor to mercy alone,"

came with power to my mind, and I repeated them with great pleasure:

"The work which his goodness began,
The arm of his strength will complete;
His promise is Yea and Amen,
And never was forfeited yet.

Things future, nor things that are now,
Not all things below nor above,
Can make him his purpose forego,
Or sever my soul from his love.

"My name from the palms of his hands
Eternity will not erase,
Impress'd on his heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven."

While so doing, I observed a gentleman in black, who sat in the gallery, hastily take his hat, and go away. The impression of my mind was that he could not endure sound doctrine, and would hear no more of it; but to my surprise he came up the aisle to the foot of the pulpit stairs, and there he stood till I had finished my sermon; and then I gave out that blessed hymn of Dr. Watts's:

"Firm as the earth thy gospel stands."

When they began to sing, the gentleman came into the pulpit and sat down, putting his hand on my knee, and saying, "Sir, I hope you will have no objection against my rising to vindicate our own doctrine?" I replied, "Sir, you are full of wrath and irritation. Be cool, and think what you are about." He said, "How can I forebear being irritated, hearing a man in our chapel labouring to pull down what we are continually establishing? I must, and will, when they have done singing, rise and defend our principles, in opposition to the doctrine you have been advancing." As he was thus speaking, I was listening to the precious hymn they were singing, which was a confirmation of the doctrine I had been preaching. As soon as I heard them begin the following words:

"In the dear bosom of his love
They must for ever rest,"

I took my standing in the pulpit to be ready to conclude with prayer. After which, I addressed the people as follows: "A gentleman, who is now in the pulpit with me, from what he has been saying to me whilst you have been singing, is determined to rise and oppose the doctrines of free and sovereign grace which you have been hearing, and vindicate the doctrine of man's free will; but as I have

already more of that in my fleshly carnal nature than I like, I shall not stop to hear him, and I would advise all you who are sick of self, and love a free-grace salvation, to go home with what you have got, and let the free-will man and his friends have it to themselves." As soon as I left the pulpit, he rose in a rage to pour contempt upon what I had said, and vindicate his own principles. I have seen many congregations disperse, but never saw such confusion as I did on this occasion. As I had several miles to ride over a large common, I got some refreshment and left. As I rode past the chapel, there were crowds engaged in disputation, and the events of that day are not yet forgotten, as will appear from the following: More than twenty years after, I met with three men from Keighley, who had come to hear me at Bradford. One of them asked me if I had forgotten preaching at Keighley, when the Wesleyan minister stood up to oppose me. I told him I had not. He said, "I well remember both your sermon and the remarks you made;" and to my surprise he repeated, almost verbatim, what I have recorded, saying it was so impressed upon his mind, and so appropriate to the circumstances, that he had often related it to his friends.

TROUBLES IN THE CHURCH.—DIVISION IN THE CHURCH AND AT MANCHESTER.

About the time of my father's death, great and sore church troubles began to gather round about me, which ended in a division. These had their origin in the church at Manchester. As I have no desire to blow up the coals of strife, and the principal persons concerned in them are now in glory, I will deal as leniently in the narration as is consistent with justice, the church of God, and myself. Mr. Gadsby's chapel was too small to hold the people, so that it became necessary either to enlarge it or build a new place of worship. The contention was so sharp between them that, like that between Paul and Barnabas, it caused a separation. The majority were for building a new chapel in a more desirable situation, and the minority, headed by Mr. Greenhough, one of the deacons and a preacher, was for having the old one enlarged. The land for the new chapel was bought; but the minority expressed themselves

so strongly about it that at length the majority gave way. The sum of £100 was paid to the owner of the land as "rue bargain," and the old chapel, so much of it, at least, as was necessary for the enlargement, was pulled down. Still there was something arose which did not please the minority, and they left in a body. To make matters worse, Mr. Greenhough and a Mr. H., who had given the builder security, withdrew that security, and the builder stopped his work. In this dilemma, Mr. Gadsby came over to Rochdale, in great distress and trouble, not knowing what to do, the chapel down, the building stopped, &c. Mr. Niven at once said he would be security for £500, which greatly gladdened Mr. Gadsby's heart. The work went on again, and did not stop until it was completed.

There was also another point of difference between them. Mr. Greenhough had repeatedly objected to Mr. Gadsby's using the term "God the Holy Ghost," as it was in his view unscriptural. This had long been a point of contention between them. For a particular account of this, see Vol. II., page 7, of Mr. Gadsby's Works. After this unhappy division had taken place, Mr. Gadsby came to the determination not to go to preach at any of the places where Mr. Greenhough and his friends went. In consequence of this resolution, the church at Rochdale was brought into great trouble. We had been accustomed to have both as supplies when I was from home; but things were now in that state that we could not. As in the church at Corinth, one was for Paul and another for Apollos, so at Rochdale, some were for Mr. Gadsby and others for Mr. Greenhough. They that were for Mr. Gadsby told me that I was the most likely man in the land to act the part of a mediator or peacemaker between them, and pressed me to go to Manchester for that purpose. In the simplicity of my heart I went, and saw both parties, and did what I could, but all in vain. I learned the truth of what Solomon said: "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions like the bars of a castle" (Prov. xxvii. 19); and my attempt taught me experimentally the truth of another of the wise man's sayings: "He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears." (Prov. xxvi. 17.)

I found Mr. Greenhough so decided and Mr. Gadsby's

mind so much hurt, especially as Mr. Greenhough and his friends had resolved upon building another chapel (which they subsequently did, in George Street, Piccadilly), that peace between them was, for the time, impossible.

The trouble that this journey to Manchester brought me cannot be erased from my mind. I was for near two years as between the upper and nether millstones, in my feelings ground as it were to powder. The restless days and sleepless nights I passed through were not a few. We had meeting after meeting about the Manchester people's affairs that ought never to have come among us. A bad spirit prevailed. When I was for peace, they were for war; so that I became weary of my life, and often said with David, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." How gladly would I have run away from the work, but I could not. I well remember going through the fields from Heywood to Stand, near Manchester, to preach, when my trouble was so great that, like Joseph, I wept aloud as I went along. The morning following, when I came down stairs at a friend's house, I went into the parlour and saw a book lying on the table. It was a volume of John Newton's works. I opened it at Letter Fifth, "On the Snares and Difficulties attending the Ministry of the Gospel." This letter was very seasonable to me, especially the following: "The ministry of the gospel, like the book the apostle John ate, is a bitter-sweet, but the sweetness is tasted first. The bitterness is usually known afterwards, when we are so far engaged that there is no going back." I found I could not go back; the honour and glory of the Lord forbade it; the fear of the Lord in my soul would not allow it; Zion's peace and prosperity demanded my standing firm at my post in all storms and temptations.

A letter from Dr. Stennett to Dr. Fawcett (see Fawcett's Memoirs, page 159) was made a great blessing to me at this time. Fawcett had a division amongst his people. In his trouble he wrote to Dr. Stennett for advice. The following is a part of Stennett's letter: "I sincerely sympathize with you in the distress you have felt on account of some misunderstandings in your church, and rejoice to find that

through your prudent Christian conduct and the blessing of God they have in any measure subsided. Trust, my dear brother, in the Lord, and you will still find him nigh at hand to help you. Jesus the Great High Priest of the church is touched with his people's infirmities, and doubtless has a tender compassion for his faithful ministers when exercised with such trials as these. I have no doubt the good of immortal souls and the peace of the community you preside over are your great objects. Having these things in view, a prudent, meek, firm, and persevering conduct will, with the divine blessing, carry you through great difficulties, and make you superior to all the discouragements which the devices of Satan and the foolish passions of men may throw in your way. And O remember, my dear friend, how good a Master you serve, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made for your support and comfort. This is the time of trial and suffering, but the day of rewards and triumph will speedily come." Many were the times that I read the above letter, and fell down before the Lord, begging him to be with me and to give me wisdom and patience, and enable me to stand my ground. Indeed, my life was a life of prayer and defence of the church and myself.

In these days of great trouble, I had the advice of my friend, Thomas Niven. When at home I was daily in conference with him. He was a great help to me, and the means, in the Lord's hand, of peace being restored in the church, as will appear from the following narration: One day, when we were walking out together, he addressed me as follows: "My dear friend, I wish to tell you the state of my mind. It has pleased the Lord, in the riches of his grace, to give me, one of the most unworthy of his creatures, a name and place amongst you as a church. Many have been the sweet and happy days that I have had with you. So much so that when I have thought of the Lord's day coming, my soul has rejoiced within me, especially if it was the church meeting or the day of the ordinances of God's house; and when these happy days have passed, I have been looking back upon them with great pleasure. But now, ever since this unhappy contention about the Manchester people's affairs has come amongst us, the thought of the Lord's day has been a terror to me, especially if it

has been the church meeting, when these contentions were often brought forward. They distress my mind in my prayers, in my closet, in the family, and in reading the word of God. Yea, they are a burden to me day and night, for we had never any right to meddle with them. Now, you mark my words, for I shall abide by what I say to you. Except the Manchester contention is put away from amongst us, I shall attend no more church meetings, nor have anything more to do with the affairs of the church. I will attend your ministry and support you; but my mind shall no longer be tormented, nor my soul robbed by these contentions; so I leave you, as the pastor of the church, to adopt such measures as you may deem most expedient." I knew he was a man of firm and decided mind, and that, unless something was done for peace, he would withdraw.

On the following Lord's day I requested our deacons to meet me at Mr. Niven's, where, in those days, I always dined on the Lord's day, and repeated to them in his presence what he had said to me. After some deliberation, it was mutually agreed to call a special church meeting, when the following resolution should be proposed by the senior deacon, and seconded by brother Thomas Niven: "That there be no more contention amongst us about the affairs of the Manchester people, and that all those persons that could not consent for it to be so should be withdrawn from." This motion was carried by a great majority. The result was the restoration of peace; but twenty-six members, with their families and friends, left the chapel, opened a room in Drake Street, were formed into a church, and supplied principally by Mr. Greenhough and his friends. In less than two years after this division we had our number of members made up. The parties that left us soon began to feel their position. Instead of an increase amongst them, there was a decrease. Some who had been the most forward in the contention went to America, and others fell back into the world. Notwithstanding these discouragements, they kept their place of meeting open ten years. After which they gave it up, and all those to whom we felt the greatest soul-union have been restored, and proved a great blessing, having learned lessons which they say they shall never forget.

It is generally the case, that those who are the most

forward to cause divisions are the first to desert the cause, leaving the simple and honest-hearted, who have been led away by their "good words and fair speeches," to bear the burden.

This division took place in the spring of the year 1826, which was a year of great national calamity. Many banks broke, trade was bad, and thousands were thrown out of employment. Some of my family, who had begun to work, could get nothing to do. The falling off of my salary, in consequence of the division, and the high price of provisions, greatly distressed us a family. We made the little we had do as well as we could, although we had many wants and privations.

MY SALARY.

About this time, my wife had a very severe lying-in; so much so that her life was despaired of. The Lord remembered us in our low estate, and we found that "better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." Had it not been for my itinerant labours, which were abundant at this time, humanly speaking we could not have existed. Our heavenly Father knew what things we had need of, and provided for us.

About this time, our senior deacon, at a church meeting, said that he had a subject to bring before them respecting their minister, which he was not aware of, but which his brother deacons and himself, with a few friends, had agreed should be taken into consideration. The subject was the minister's salary, which had not been named at a church meeting for ten years; when it was agreed that he should have the pew-rents, which he had duly received; but latterly the times had been very bad, and there had been a division which had caused a falling off in the pew-rents of more than twenty pounds per year, and not one of them had been called upon to find an extra penny. The minister had borne it all himself; and the deacons thought the church ought to bear part of the burden. He should therefore propose that the church should engage to give him seventy pounds a year; and if the pew-rents did not make that amount, to raise it by subscription amongst themselves. The church said they were very sorry that the business

had not been brought before them sooner, and they were agreeing to give me seventy pounds per year; but I told them that as neither the church nor myself knew anything about it till that night, it would be better to let it lie over for consideration till the next church meeting, as things done hastily did not often wear well. This was agreed to.

At the next church meeting the case was brought forward again, when they showed their willingness to raise seventy pounds a year; but I told them that I did not wish anyone to be pressed to find money to support me, and that I should be better satisfied if they said sixty pounds a year. This was cheerfully and unanimously ageed to. I am happy to be able to say that during the next year the pew-rents made more than that sum, and have been on the increase ever since.

The Lord be praised for his goodness to us as a church and to me, their unworthy pastor, for Jesus' sake.

The people at Manchester who separated from Mr. Gadsby and built a new chapel had a Mr. Upcraft settled over them as their pastor. They strove hard to get on; but notwithstanding all their efforts they gradually decreased, some returning to their old minister. The burden became so heavy for the few that remained that the chapel had to be sold. The remnant took a room, where they met in discouraging circumstances for some years, but eventually gave it up.

RUNNING BEFORE SENT.

It is remarkable that in the churches of Manchester and Rochdale there were several persons who were preachers. These all went away when the divisions took place, having been the principal movers in the disturbances. It is a pity that when good men get what has been not improperly called "the preaching fever," they become a plague to themselves, a source of trouble to their pastor, and cause confusion in the church of God. I well remember my affliction, my misery, the wormwood and gall my soul had to drink in those days "by those serpents by the way, and adders in the path, that bite the horse-heels, so that their riders shall fall backward." (Gen. xlix. 17.) I have now letters by me which abundantly prove the truth of these

statements. I had great opposition to contend with from these would-be preachers, and many were the charges that they brought against me before the church, which caused me to make my defence in writing. Hoping it may be useful to some of my readers, I insert the following extracts:

"A Christian man who is determined to run before he is sent is like Ahimaaz, who would be a bearer of tidings, though Joab was against his going, and told him that he had no tidings to bear; yet run he would, though when he appeared before David the king, all he could say was that he saw a great tumult, but knew not what it was. David bade him turn aside, and stand still (2 Sam. xviii. 30), and let Cushi, the faithful and truly authorized messenger, come forward and declare what he had seen and known of the matter. It does not appear that Ahimaaz found fault with David for commanding him to turn aside, or with Cushi, the true messenger, as my accusers have done with me. It appears that Ahimaaz saw his error, and was still; and it would be well for my accusers to be still until they are endued with power from on high. Now, my brethren, mark well what I am going to say. There are four things that attend every one that God sends to labour in his vineyard. First, they have an inward call from God, which is the Spirit's mighty operation leading them into the work. (Gal. ii. 8.) Secondly, they are fitted and qualified for the work by the great Head of the church, who has ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and received (ministerial) gifts for men. (Eph. iv. 12.) Thirdly, the Lord in his providence opens doors for them without their having to push themselves forward in the work, for he never sends a man but he has a work for him to do, and strengthens and supports him in it. (Mark xvi. 20; Matt. xxviii. 20.) Fourthly, when the Lord sends a man to preach, his power so attends the word spoken by him that he is made manifest in the souls of God's people as the Lord's messenger. (1 Thess. i. 5.) Yes, brethren, whenever God, in his providence, sends him to stand up in his name, if the people have never seen his face before, the Lord by his Spirit makes him so manifest in the souls of his own people that they cry out, 'This is one of the Lord's sent servants,' and they make manifest their attachment to him by communicating to him what Paul calls 'their carnal things;' so that he finds that his Master has

not sent him a warfare at his own charges. I may also add, the Lord both does and will bless such with seals to their ministry; for it is by them, as instruments in his hand, that he has ordained the ingathering of his people to himself as their spiritual Shiloh. (Gen. xlix. 10.) Some years ago, there was a good man at Manchester, who was a deacon and an occasional preacher. Mr. Gadsby called upon him one day after dinner, and found him in his parlour lying on the sofa. He asked him how he was, when he replied, 'I am just coming to conclusions.' 'About what?' asked Mr. Gadsby. 'About preaching,' said the old man. 'Our church says I am not sent to preach, and the Lord says I must preach; so I will be like Peter, obey God rather than man. I will preach whether the people will or not.' Mr. Gadsby endeavoured to show him that the Lord never sent a man to preach but he put it into the hearts of his people to encourage him, and as instruments in his hand to send him forth, as in the case of the church at Antioch, when the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

I am happy to be able to state that a reconciliation took place between Mr. Gadsby and Mr. Greenhough some time before the death of the latter; and as I believe they are both in glory, I should be sorry to wound the minds of any of their survivors. But as we are commanded "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3,) I must give a faithful statement of facts. These men agreed to meet, and, if possible, come to a better understanding. When Mr. Gadsby said, "Friend Greenhough, to let you see that I have no desire to keep up a contention out of which no spiritual comfort can arise, either to ourselves or others, I am willing to bury all that has unhappily arisen between us out of bricks and mortar or the enlargement of the chapel, and let it no more be named between us. But your nibbling, as you have done, at my making use of the terms 'God the Holy Ghost' in my ministry, I cannot be reconciled to, as the Godhead and Personality of the Holy Ghost is a vital principle with me; for in it the

honour and glory of a Triune Jehovah, in the salvation of his people and the comfort and edification of the church, are concerned." Mr. Greenhough candidly confessed he had "seen his error" in opposing the using of the term "God the Holy Ghost" in the ministry of the word, and said that the conviction of his mind came in the following manner: "I went," said he, "to preach at a certain place, and arrived on Saturday night. After I went to bed, I lay thinking of my text for the next morning, which was I. Cor. iii. 9: 'Ye are God's building,' when it was opened to my mind in the following manner: First, the foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man. Secondly, the builder, God the Holy Ghost, whose work is to hew poor sinners out of the quarry of nature, and build them as lively stones upon Christ the sure foundation. Thirdly, God the Father is the Husbandman, and his church is his habitation, in which he will dwell for ever. Thus I saw at once, according to my text, that the Holy Ghost, as the builder, must be God, and equal with the Father and the Immortal Word in every attribute and perfection of Deity; and from that time I have seen the beauty and propriety of using the term 'God the Holy Ghost' both in preaching and prayer." Mr. Gadsby replied, "I am quite satisfied, and should like to have the statement you have just made in writing, with your name signed to it." To this Mr. Greenhough consented; and having written it, and given it to Mr. Gadsby, they shook hands. This reconciliation gave great joy to many of the Lord's family.

I cannot do justice to the character of Mr. Greenhough without informing my reader that he was an exceedingly hospitable man, forward to remember the poor, and to do good to all men, but especially the household of faith. Mr. Gadsby and myself visited him in his last sickness, and found him stayed on the Rock of Ages. We attended his funeral. Mr. Gadsby delivered the address at the grave, and preached his funeral sermon.

One trial seldom comes alone. In the month of August, 1826, my esteemed friend Thomas Niven returned to Scotland to end his days and be buried with his fathers. This was an exceedingly great trial to me. When I was at home,

we were mostly together engaged in reading the word of God, and other valuable books. We began and ended our meetings with prayer. He frequently accompanied me in visiting the sick. Many were our private walks in which we spoke one to another of the things of God and of his church and people. I can never be sufficiently thankful to the Lord for the temporal and spiritual benefits I received from this dear man of God. I have heard my predecessor, Mr. Warburton, say, and he knew him well, that in all his extensive acquaintance he never had to do with a more humble, kind, affectionate, and faithful brother in the Lord. Regularity, punctuality, and perseverance in all that was good were his constant practice. His hospitality was great, his benevolence to the poor unbounded, never, if he could avoid it, letting his left hand know what his right hand did. After his death, I wrote a short Obituary of him, which appeared in the "Gospel Standard" for October, 1836. It was promised to be continued, and very many enquiries were made for its appearance; but I could not get sufficient information of his last days to renew it. For the benefit of such of my readers who may not have the "Gospel Standard" of that date, I transcribe it into this memoir, hoping the Lord may make it "a blessing to their souls:"

"Thomas Niven was a North Briton, being born and brought up in Dumfriesshire. When a young man, he came to England and commenced travelling, as many of his countrymen do to this time. In this employment he continued for forty years, and afterwards became an importer of Irish linen.

"But as my business is not to give an account of him as a man of the world, but as a man of God, I proceed to say something of what the Lord did for his soul. He was led to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. The work of conviction was very keen, and continued for many months, so that he was brought in his feelings to the very gates of gaping hell. He resolved and vowed again and again that he would depart from evil, and keep the law of Moses, who often, as he was wont to say, took him by the throat and said, 'Pay me what thou owest.' At length he was led to see and feel that notwithstanding all his resolutions and promises, he continually came short, and had not one mite to call his own, but was doomed to lie in prison

shut up under the fiery law of God, with the awful thunderings of Mount Sinai in his soul, saying, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not,' &c. Such was the distress of his mind that he was tempted to believe that he could not be more miserable if he were in hell. The great adversary tried hard to persuade him to put an end to his existence and know the worst. Accordingly, on a Lord's day morning, he came to the awful determination of drowning himself. The place he fixed upon to do this awful deed was between some deep rocks, through which a river ran, concluding that if he jumped in it would be impossible to get out. But behold the wonders of God's grace and mercy! When he came to the top of the rocks and looked down into the river, ready in his feelings to sink into the bottomless pit under the weight of his sin and the terrors of God in his law, harassed with the fiery darts of the devil, he heard the still small voice of the Lord from heaven, saying unto him, 'Poor distressed soul, it is not for anything thou hast done, or can do, that thou art to be saved, but for what my beloved Son has done for thee.' He saw Jesus in the river by the eye of faith, and the blessed Spirit led him to the river Jordan, and the garden of Gethsemane, and Calvary's cross. He saw the Holy Spirit descend and light upon him like a dove, and heard a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' He had a view by faith of Immanuel's Person and of his perfect obedience to the divine law, being the end of the law to every one that believeth. He saw Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane sweating great drops of blood, and upon the accursed tree dying the just for the unjust. Like Manoah and his wife, he looked on, while the blessed Spirit showed him that a divine atonement was made, law and justice satisfied, the way to heaven opened up by the blood of the cross. Like Bunyan's Christian pilgrim, he lost his burden. Like David, he was lifted up out of the horrible pit, and set upon the Rock, and a song of praise and thanksgiving was given to him. He was so taken up with a precious Christ and his finished salvation that he spent all the morning by the river side. In this happy state of mind he went home to his dinner. Being more cheerful than usual, the good man of the house reproved him for being so merry on the Lord's day. 'Ah, my dear Sir,' said our friend, 'you do not know what I

have seen and felt in my poor soul this morning. I have seen strange things to-day.' (Luke v. 26.) At the same time he could not help weeping for joy. Being thus taught of God the necessity of a finished salvation, all of grace, a Yea and Nay gospel he could not receive. The sinner abased and Christ exalted was the joy of his heart.

"For many years after he came to England he met with few ministers that he could hear to profit. A Mr. Charles Bamford, of Hey Barn, near Rochdale, who finished his life and labours at Pole Moor, near Huddersfield, and Mr. John Hurst, of Bacup, were men that he loved and esteemed highly in love for their works' sake. When it pleased the Lord in his providence to bring Mr. Gadsby into these parts, reports concerning him spread far and wide. Some said that he was a good man; others said, 'Nay, he is a deceiver of the people;' so that Mr. N. formed a very unfavourable opinion of him, until one of his Christian friends lent him 'A Dream,' published by Mr. Gadsby. He read it, and found his experience so truthfully described that from that time he felt a union of soul to its author that will never be dissolved, either in time or eternity; and, consequently, he became one of his warmest friends and supporters as a minister of the gospel of God our Saviour.

"Removing from Haslingden to Rochdale, he became a regular hearer of Mr. Warburton's, and eventually joined the church at Hope Chapel.

"Though Thomas Niven was a man of property, there was no one more humble: he never attempted to lord it over God's heritage. He would attend church meeting after church meeting, and never utter a syllable unless when asked a question, or something unpleasant took place amongst the brethren, causing warmth of spirit and angry words, when he would begin to speak with tears of affection, and say, 'My dear brethren and sisters, we are surrounded with enemies who would be glad to hear of our halting. We are one family, loved with the same love, bought with the same price, called by the same grace, and heirs of the same inheritance. As Christian pilgrims we are travelling through this vale of tears to a better country, where we hope to spend a happy eternity together. And shall we fall out by the way, and be as pricking thorns in each other's eyes and sides, and embitter each other's cup of woe? God

forbid! Let us follow after the things that make for our peace and edification, be kind and affectionate one to another, in honour preferring one another.' Many more portions of the Scriptures would he bring forth, tending to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It may be truly said of him he was a peacemaker. Flattery he could not give to anyone, nor could he take it himself. Kindness, honesty, and faithfulness shone bright in him, and what he was he was by the grace of God."

There are none of my readers who fear the Lord and love the peace and prosperity of Zion but will say such a man was a great blessing to the church of God, and that his removal must have been a great loss. Such, my readers, I found it to be. Perhaps I placed too much confidence in him, and the Lord suffered him to go away, that I might look more to himself and less to the creature. His reasons for leaving Rochdale and returning to his own country were as follows: He was getting far advanced in years and his sight nearly gone; so that he could not go about without a guide, and the impression of his mind was that his days were nearly ended, and, like the patriarchs, he had a desire to be buried with his fathers.

About this time also my itinerant labours were much upon the increase, which caused him to be left much alone, and confined to the house. Whenever I went from home, and when I returned, he always wished me to call upon him, that he might know when I should be with him. Like David and Jonathan, we were of one heart and soul. Before he left England it was agreed between us that if his life was prolonged I was to go to see him, which I did in the month of August, 1828. Mr. Thomas Turner, his nephew, who was also a great friend to me, accompanied me. During our journey we had to sing of judgment and mercy.

When we left Manchester it was a fine day, and riding outside the coach found it very pleasant until we got a little behind Burton, in Westmoreland, when we were overtaken by an awful thunderstorm. In an instant three of the horses were killed, and lay dead in the road. One of our fellow-passengers, a female, also felt the awful effects of the electric fluid, a portion of her dress being burnt and torn by it, and her lower parts mutilated; so that the blood flowed profusely and ran down the road. The coach was quite full

of passengers, inside and out. We were all in a state of great consternation, as the storm continued for some time, fearing we were all about to be cut off. The woman was taken back to Burton in a chaise, and we got fresh horses and proceeded on our journey. I have since been told by my esteemed friend, the late William Rushton, of Liverpool, that this woman feared God, and was a member of the Baptist church under the pastoral care of the late Moses Fisher. It was more than twelve months before she was able to be taken to the chapel in a chaise. As we proceeded over Kendal and Shap Fells, my meditations were very solemn. The hairbreadth escape I had just experienced sank deep into my mind. The umbrella, bonnet, and cap of the female that was injured fell at my elbow. "O," I thought, "it might have missed her and taken me!" which brought to my mind the following lines:

"Plagues and deaths around me fly;
Till he bids I cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit
Till the God of love sees fit."

The Lord's appearing to the children of Israel in the thick darkness upon Mount Sinai, and the awful thunderings and lightnings which made them and even Moses exceedingly fear and quake, were brought to my mind. Awful and terrible as the Lord appeared on such occasions, I was led to see that he is the God of his church and people; and although they are made to tremble before him, he is their heavenly Father, and smiles upon them in his beloved Son. Whilst thus ruminating, the following lines of Dr. Watts's came sweetly to my remembrance:

"The God that rules on high,
And thunders when he please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas,—

"This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love;
He shall send down his heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, speaks of laying hold of eternal life. I was enabled to lay hold of this great and glorious Lord, and feelingly to say,

"This awful God is mine,
My Father and my love."

I was constrained to speak of his power and glory to the passengers that surrounded me, and from what I have since heard, I have reason to believe it was made a blessing to some of them.

The next day we arrived in Scotland, at the residence of our friend Thomas Niven, and were gladly received. When we told him of the perils we had met with by the way, and how mercifully we had been spared, he was much affected. I stayed with him about a fortnight, during which time we renewed our former practice of reading, conversation, and prayer, and taking our walks, in which many inquiries were made by him after old friends and the affairs of the church, in which exercise we found great pleasure.

Although I was two Lord's days in Scotland at this time, being in a rural district I had no opportunity of getting a congregation to preach to, but as Ananias to Saul and Philip to the eunuch, I preached to my friend and his family connexions. We went to the church one Lord's day morning, but not a crumb of the bread of life did I get. We were told we had a righteousness to work out for ourselves. This was soul-sickening to me, as I had long proved my righteousness to be at best but as filthy rags. The dear old man lamented much the want of a faithful ministration of the word.

We returned home by water, and had an awfully rough sea. Before this time I had often longed to see the wonders of the Lord in the great deep, as David sets them forth in Psa. cvii. 24. The angry waves were so terrific that I closed my eyes that I might not see them. The night appeared very long. Being obliged to keep on deck, I thought of what Paul experienced when "neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay upon us." (Acts xxvii. 20.) I saw the greatness, power, and glory of the Lord, who "holdeth the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hand," who in a more awful storm said, "Peace, be still: and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Well might it be said, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

I went a second time to visit my old friend, and found him residing at Maxwell Town, Dumfries. Being there on a Lord's day, I preached for the Baptists in the morning,

and for the Independents in the evening. Before I left the pulpit I was requested to inform the people that I was to preach there again on Tuesday evening. When the time came my friend and I went, but to our great surprise found the doors closed against us. On making inquiry as to the reason, we were informed that when the minister of the place returned from where he had been preaching, and was informed what kind of doctrine had been advanced, and the effect it produced upon the people, constraining them to desire a second benefit, he was so indignant that he resolved I should preach there no more. It was very painful to see so many people gathered together to hear Christ exalted, and to meet with such a disappointment, having no place to go to sufficiently large to hold them. I never recollect seeing my old friend so grieved. Several of his friends who had come that day to the market stayed that they might hear the preaching. There were only a few precious souls in this town with whom he could hold Christian fellowship.

My dear friend died on August 8th, 1835, being full of days, and in the enjoyment of those great and precious truths which had been the support and comfort of his soul for more than sixty years. In thinking of this dear man of God, I have in remembrance with what sweet and solemn pleasure he often, in our walks, repeated those precious hymns of Toplady's:

"A debtor to mercy alone,"

and

"Rock of Ages."

The truths contained in these hymns were the joy of his heart; and so they are of mine.

Let the reader pause here, and ask himself this question: "Do I heartily receive and inwardly digest these doctrines?" If he does, he can say with Hart:

"These are truths, and happy they
Who can well receive them."

In concluding the above acconnt, my soul prays to the Lord to bless his churches with many more such men as Thomas Niven. And to him shall be the glory.

In the beginning of my ministry, and for 26 years afterwards, I had a valuable friend, Mrs. Hannah Lord, whose

husband was a class leader amongst the Wesleyans, and an opposer of the discriminating doctrines of grace. When she joined our church, she had to pass through great persecution, and great also was her consolation, the Lord, according to his promise, being with her in the fire. Having no children, Mr. Lord adopted one of his brother's children, and this child always came with her aunt to our chapel. When this girl was about fourteen years of age, the Lord was graciously pleased to put his fear into her heart, to convince her of her lost state as a sinner, and to reveal a precious Christ to her soul as her Saviour and Redeemer. The love of Christ being shed abroad in her heart, she loved him, his truth, his people, and his ways, and desired to have a name and place among them, which is better than that of sons and daughters. When this was made known to me by my wife, who had frequent conversations with her, I was afraid of the storm of persecution that I knew would ensue, being well aware of what Mrs. Lord had to pass through when she joined the church. The girl declared to me what the Lord had wrought in her soul; I saw the grace of God in her, and was glad. I inquired if the thing had been made known to her uncle. Her aunt replied, "No. We think you had better break it to him." I sought an opportunity, and in the kindest manner I could I told him the great things the Lord had done for his niece; also that it was her desire to be baptized and join the church. As I was narrating the facts of the case, I perceived by his very breathing that evil was working in his mind against it. His reply was, "Are you aware what age our Betsy is?" I saw, from the manner in which he asked the question, that he meant to raise an objection against her baptism and communion with our church upon the ground of her youth. In replying, I said, "Supposing your niece had gone as regularly with you to your chapel as she has come with her aunt to ours, and paid the same attention to her Bible, closet prayer, and every other religious duty which was in her power, would you raise an argument against her joining your society upon the ground of her youth? Would not you rather say, 'What a mercy it is that our Betsy remembers her Creator in the days of her youth'? Would not you and your friends gladly receive her?" He replied, "Perhaps we should," and in an abrupt

manner left the room. Neither time nor space will allow me to narrate the continued persecution that my never-failing friend Hannah Lord and this girl had to endure. The girl came before the church, and the Lord was with her, in enabling her to give a reason of the hope that was in her with meekness and fear. Many of the friends sat in tears. I felt very thankful when she declared what benefit she had received from some sermons I had preached. She stated to the church that while enduring persecution, her uncle threatening to put her away and disinherit her, she received great comfort from that hymn of Dr. Watts's, beginning:

"My God, my portion, and my love;"

especially from the sixth verse, which she repeated, evidently with great feeling:

"How vain a toy is glittering wealth,
If once compared to thee!
Or what's my safety or my health
Or all my friends to me?"

She was baptized and added to the church on March 1st, 1829. Her aunt, Hannah Lord, died on May 5th, 1840, aged 75 years. I was supplying in London when the tidings reached me, and they greatly troubled me. She was a true and faithful companion of my wife, a great friend to me, and a blessing to the Lord's poor saints. So humiliating were the views she had of herself that she often wondered why the Lord suffered her to live so long. I told her one thing was to assist me in relieving the Lord's poor. She lived near the chapel, and, like Mr. Niven, she wished me always to call, both when I went from home and when I returned; on which occasions she had the opportunity of inquiring how my poor-fund was, and of helping me, as she could well afford. She was an example to all around in her attendance upon the means of grace, was highly esteemed by many, and at her death much lamented. I preached her funeral sermon from a portion of the word of God which had been made a great blessing to her: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion," &c. (Isa. lxi. 3.) Long before her death her husband attended our chapel, and continued to do so as long as he lived. In many things he became very kind and friendly, frequently consulting

me in his temporal affairs, though he gave no evidence that the fear of God was in his heart.

A SEVERE TRIAL.

I HAVE been the more particular in mentioning my connexion with this family, as my son William, of whom I am about to give an account, married the young woman. William was born on November 15th, 1812. Our circumstances, at this time and for long afterwards, were such that, as soon as he was able, he had to go to work at the flannel trade. until the Lord in his providence opened the door for him to go and live with a true friend of mine, Mr. Joseph Higginson, one of Mr. Gadsby's deacons, with whom I lodged for thirty years when supplying at Manchester. They had no children of their own, and my son stayed with them until he was married. It was a great comfort to my mind that he was enabled to conduct himself in such a manner as to give the greatest satisfaction to his employer. During the time he lived at Manchester, he came home poorly, and his illness proved to be the typhus fever. One day the doctor took me in the garden, and expressed his fears that he would die, kindly exhorting me to prepare for the worst, as he called it. This was a great trial, as, like Jacob, I found my life bound up in the lad's life. I had strong crying unto the Lord for him, until I was brought feelingly to say, "Thy will be done on earth (with me and mine) as it is done in heaven." I felt this to be hard work for flesh and blood; for a more kind, faithful, and affectionate son I never knew. I was aware that good morals could not save his soul, as none but Jesus can save; and all redeemed souls must be born again. I cried to the Lord for evidence that he was a regenerated child of God. One day, thinking I heard him calling for something, I went to the bottom of the stairs, and soon perceived he was engaged in prayer. The first words I could distinctly understand were these: "O Lord, whether I am to die at this time or be raised up again, grant that I may be found saved in that day when thou makest up thy jewels." My soul responded to this petition. My neighbour, Mr. John Ely, the minister of the Independent chapel at Rochdale, came daily to see him, and, after much conversation with him on the concerns of

his soul, expressed to me his firm conviction that the grace of God was in him.

He began to amend, and he then told me of some texts of scripture, and sermons that he had heard Mr. Gadsby preach, which had been made a blessing to his soul. One day, as I was writing to Mr. and Mrs. Higginson, to inform them that he was getting better, I asked him if I should tell them what the Lord had done for his soul. His reply was, "No, father. If I am spared to go back, let my future conduct and conversation tell them, and not you." I could not forbear saying within myself, "Bless thee, my lad; thou hast more sense than I have."

When twenty-one years of age, he married, and commenced business in our town, and his business increased beyond our most sanguine expectations; so that his late master came over to see how the premises could be enlarged. The day the alterations were commenced, he had to go to Manchester by the coach that left Rochdale at three o'clock in the afternoon. At this time, September, 1834, the cholera was raging at Manchester in an awful manner. While on the coach, about half way to Manchester, he was seized with it, and was conveyed with great difficulty to his old master's, at Greengate, Salford. The man that engaged to enlarge the premises went with him, and returned with the melancholy intelligence. His wife and I took horse and chaise and set off immediately; but the deep anxiety of our minds, as we went along, not knowing whether we should find him dead or alive, may be better imagined than described. We reached the place two hours before he died. He knew us, and was exceedingly glad to see us, but was not able to speak many words to us, his sufferings were so intense, his body being drawn with the cramp in all parts. Two doctors were engaged before we got there, and everything done that could be; but all in vain, as the appointed time was come. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?" (Job vii. 1.)

It would be impossible to describe the feelings and exercises of my soul under this unexpected and trying dispensation. When the sensibilities of nature had a little subsided, I was enabled to justify the Lord, and to blame myself, as conscience testified that I had been too much concerned about his temporal affairs, my own soul having

been in some measure robbed, my attention being drawn from things spiritual to things temporal. My mind was also too much diverted from my ministerial work, so that the church and the cause of God and truth had not my whole heart as before and afterwards. My son was too great an idol, and the Lord made good his own word: "From all your idols will I cleanse you." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) Although contrary to my natural feelings as a parent, and while in tears, I have stood by his grave in Hope Chapel yard and thanked the Lord for taking him. The Lord enabled me to preach a sermon occasioned by his death to an overflowing congregation, from Lev. x. 3: "And Aaron held his peace." The Lord helped me much. There was great lamentation made over him both in the church and the congregation, as well as by his neighbours and business connexions. The spirit of his poor mother was so broken by this dispensation that she was never so cheerful afterwards.

A short time before my son's death, Mrs. Higginson lent me Brook's "Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod," which was made a great blessing to me, and to his widow. Before the death of my son William, we had lost five children; but the loss of him was heavier than that of all the rest. I had a great desire to have a Samuel, and called two children by that name. We had also two named Mary. Three of these lived to be four and five years of age, were very lovely and intelligent children, and had a place in my heart and soul, especially the first Samuel, who would always be with me. The Lord laid his afflicting hand upon him in such a manner as to make me willing to part with him; and many times did I fall upon my knees in my closet, and beseech the Lord to deliver him, and take him to himself. There have been times when my natural affection toward my offspring has been so strong that being bereaved of them has caused the most awful feelings of rebellion to arise in my mind against the Lord for taking them; but when in my right mind, I thanked him for removing them from the evil to come, and could say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the Lord."

MY FIRST VISIT TO LONDON.

In the course of my ministry the Lord has honoured me

with the friendship of many of his own sent servants, amongst whom I number Mr. Henry Heap, of Bury Street chapel, St. Mary Axe, London, the place of the ministry of Dr. Watts. He was a Lancashire man, and annually visited his native county for the benefit of his health, and to see his relatives and friends. Several times he preached our annual sermons for the benefit of our Sabbath school, and very kindly inquired after our circumstances as a church. The deacons, on one occasion, informed him, "there was a debt remaining upon the chapel of nearly five hundred pounds, besides ground-rent, and that my salary had never been more than from sixty to seventy pounds per year." He told them he hoped he should be the instrument in the Lord's hands of removing a part of the debt, and that when he saw an opening for me to supply some destitute place in the metropolis that could bear my expenses, he would send for me, and introduce me to some of his friends who were lovers of the truth, and would assist us. Several years rolled round before he saw an opening; so that we began to fear nothing would be done for us. But in the July of 1832, he wrote to us, saying there was a Particular Baptist church destitute of a pastor, that they had applied to him, through the leading deacon, Joshua Pedley, Esq., for a supply, that he had recommended me, and that I was to go for four Lord's days, to commence the second Sabbath in August. He did not say what chapel it was, nor who had been their minister, but that the congregation, from various causes, was small.

When Mr. Heap's letter came, I was in Cheshire. On the following Lord's day it was read to the church, who agreed that I should go. As an early answer was required, and I was not expected home till the end of the week, the deacons forwarded the letter to meet me at Mr. Higginson's, Manchester, at whose house I was to call before I returned home. When I had read the letter, and answered it, I called upon Mr. Gadsby. As I walked alone I felt a spirit of grace and supplication poured down into my soul. The words of Moses were brought sweetly and powerfully to my remembrance, and I pleaded them before the Lord: "If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." The Lord's promise was very sweet and encouraging: "My presence shall go with thee." (Ex. xxxiii. 14.)

From this time my journey to London daily occupied my thoughts. Many prayers did I offer up to the Lord to be with me. Mr. Heap had previously told me that if I got my begging case signed by Mr. Ely, of Rochdale, and Messrs. Gadsby and Nunn, of Manchester, it would be quite sufficient. The case was drawn up, read to the church, and signed by the deacons. I then took it to Mr. Ely, who wrote the following recommendation: "Whilst candour requires me to state that the bearer of this case dwells upon the higher points of doctrine more exclusively than I should deem desirable, and that the doctrines he holds are probably in some respects higher than I should be disposed to subscribe to, I have great pleasure in recommending the case. I highly esteem Mr. Kershaw for his unquestionable piety, his Christian spirit, and his laborious zeal. His people are, as far as I have had the opportunity of knowing them, holy men, who exercise a spirit of affection towards their fellow-Christians. The kind contributions of the Christian public will be a great encouragement to an excellent man, whose labours are above measure, and to the people of his charge, whose means of supporting him are greatly limited.

"John Ely,
"Independent Minister.
"Rochdale, Aug. 2nd, 1832."

I cannot forget the kindness of Mr. Ely when he returned me the book, saying, "Mr. Kershaw, to let you see that I do not love in word only but in deed, I give you this guinea to commence with." My esteemed friend Mr. William Nunn wrote the following: "Knowing my brother John Kershaw to be a faithful minister of the everlasting Yea and Amen Gospel of the covenant Jehovah of his elect and beloved in Christ, I most readily commend the application, believing the case to be correct, and well worthy of support.

"William Nunn, A.M.,
"Minister of St. Clement's Church.
"Manchester, Aug. 8th, 1832."

"We have great pleasure in recommending the above case.

"William Gadsby,
"John Warburton."

The case was also recommended and signed by the following ministers:

Jacob Kirkham Forster, compiler of the "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon." He had been my neighbour for sixteen years;
Henry Heap, Independent Minister, London;
David Denham, Baptist Minister, Margate;
Joseph Irons, Independent Minister, Camberwell;
Joseph Sedgwick, Baptist Minister, Brighton;
John Vinall, Minister of Jireh Chapel, Lewes, Sussex;
William Savory, Baptist Minister, Brighton.

It is now more than thirty years since these kind friends interested themselves on my behalf. They have finished their course, and their Lord and Master has taken them home, to dwell with him above; and whilst I ascribe all the glory to the Lord, I would acknowledge their kindness, as instruments in his hands of forwarding the case and affording good advice, which proved of great benefit to me.

I trust I left home in the fear of the Lord, after reading Ps. cxxxix. (which I call my travelling psalm) and prayer, commending my wife, family, church, and congregation to the Lord, and entreating that his blessing and presence might be with me. I stayed in Manchester the first night, and received from Mr. Gadsby such instructions as he deemed needful to give. We left Manchester in the evening, having to travel all night. The Lord alone knows the many petitions I offered up to him upon the coach as we travelled along.

On the road from Northampton to London there were with me three aged gentlemen, who were exceedingly kind to me. Understanding that I had never travelled the road before, they pointed out to me the different mansions, and described the families which occupied them. They showed me also the great improvements that had been made in the road within their remembrance. But their well-meant kindness was a burden to me, as it interrupted my meditations and prayer.

As the coach entered Islington, these words dropped into my soul with great power and sweetness: "For there stood by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve." The last clause especially was sweet, the Holy

Ghost bearing witness with my spirit that I was "the Lord's," by election, redemption, and regeneration. I could appeal to him that I was entering the great city to serve him and his church and people for Jesus' sake.

I found Mr. Heap waiting for me at the coach office, Lad Lane, City. He took me to his house, and told me I was to open my commission in Bury Street Chapel the following evening, giving me the following seasonable advice: "Brother Kershaw, although you are come to preach the gospel in London, do not attempt to speak in finer language than when in Lancashire. Out with it, firm and bold, in your own homely style. The Londoners will understand you." And I believe they did.

When the time came, I found many gathered together. The late Mr. George Coombe, of Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, prayed, and I preached from 2 Thess. ii. 16: "And good hope through grace." As soon as I began to speak, I saw from the countenances of the people that they both understood and felt the power and savour of the truth delivered. After service I was introduced by Mr. Heap to Joshua Pedley and William Hebden, deacons of Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, saying, "I now deliver up my Lancashire friend to you. See that you take care of him." And I am happy to say I never received anything but kindness from them. Dear Mr. Hebden took me to my lodgings in the Commercial Road. Amongst other instructions which Mr. Gadsby gave me, he said, "You will see a Baptist minister of the name of George Coombe. I wish you to be friendly with him; for there is not a minister in or about London that I think more of than I do of him." I thought it rather remarkable that he should meet me the first time I stood up in the city, and pray, as he did, that the presence and blessing of the Lord might be with me. From this time to his death there was a growing attachment between us; for we were of one heart and soul in the things of God. He preached at Rochdale the summer before his death. With many others, I greatly lamented his loss.

On the Saturday morning, Mr. Hebden called upon me to give me some account of their affairs, and the troubles that, as a church, they had been called to pass through, which had brought them into a very low state. I entreated

him to say nothing to me about their affairs, as I was an entire stranger among them, saying, "I wish to go into the pulpit as the Lord's servant, and preach the preaching that he bids me, leaving the result with him who has said, 'My word shall not return unto me void,'" &c. (Isa. lv. 11.) The old man rose quickly and cheerfully from his seat, and, giving me his hand, said, "You are very right in what you say, and the Lord bless you. I will call for you in the morning, and take you to the chapel." The rest of the day I spent in meditation and prayer.

When the morning came, Mr. H. took me to Zoar Chapel, which I found was a large commodious place of worship. As I sat in the minister's vestry I heard a person engage in prayer in the large vestry. I found he spoke the language of Canaan, and I said within myself, "If the people be like this man, I shall be no barbarian to them, nor will they be barbarians to me."

I entered the pulpit; but before reading my text I told them "that I had come up to London with my heart and eyes up unto the Lord to be with me, and make his precious truth spoken by me a blessing to the souls of his own people, and that as I entered the town the words that I was about to read them as my text were brought with great power to my mind (Acts xxvii. 23): 'For there stood by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.'" The Lord helped me much, and great attention was paid to the words. After service, the deacon above mentioned came into the vestry and said, "You see, my dear friend, we have been very thinly attended this morning." I replied, "Yes." He added, "Mark my words. You are come here for four Lord's days, and before you have finished them you will see this chapel, which seats from seven to eight hundred people, filled from the pulpit door into the street. There is such a want of these great and precious truths being preached in this simple Bible style of language in this great city that there will be such a flocking to hear as will astonish you. The few that have been here this morning will go amongst their friends in all directions, and, like the woman of Samaria, say, 'Come and hear a man that told me all things that ever I did.'" I replied I could not think that would be the case.

In the evening I was surprised to see the increase of

people. After service, the deacon came again with a smile upon his countenance, saying, "You see we are greatly increased to-night. I have just been talking with a God-fearing man who has been hearing you, who can speak seven languages. I told him what I had said to you in the morning, and that you were slow of heart to believe it. And he declares I shall be a true prophet." And so he was; for before the four Lord's days were over numbers went away that could not get within the chapel doors. These things tended greatly to humble my soul before the Lord, and to create thankfulness to him as a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

My reader will recollect that in speaking of my call to the ministry, mention is made of two young men that I was acquainted with being sent to an academy, and the strong cryings I had to the Lord that he would make it manifest that he could raise up, fit, and qualify such a poor, ignorant, obscure, polluted worm as I, and make me a special blessing to his church and people, without going to an academy and being puffed up with pride, as I saw they were; and the Lord assured me that he would grant my request, and make it manifest, both to friends and foes, that he had raised up such an unlikely creature, and thus secure all the glory to himself.

As the Lord made my labours acceptable to the people, and my begging case required time, my stay in London was prolonged to thirteen Lord's days. Many doors were opened for me in London and its vicinity. The Lord kept me very sensible of my insufficiency for the work; so that my daily cry, as I was traversing the streets, was, "Lord, keep me humble, that I may lift thee high." I generally went into the pulpit trembling with the above-named words on my mind: "Whose I am, and whom I serve;" for they were a great help to me. When I stood up to read my text, and looked at the crowds of people that surrounded me, I was enabled to cast myself upon the Lord, saying, "Use me as shall be most for thy honour and glory, and the good of thy church and people." At such times the promises the Lord gave me before I entered the ministry were brought to my remembrance; and then strength and valour sprang up in my soul, my fears fled away, and I found I had the four faces spoken of by Ezekiel (i. 10): "The face of a man, of a lion,

of an ox, and of an eagle;" all which are needful to a gospel minister. As my friends saw me go into the pulpit they pitied me, and prayed the Lord to bless and help me, as I appeared so dejected and cast down. But when I began to preach, and the Master appeared, they often said it might not have been the same person they had just seen go up the pulpit stairs like a worm. I have in innumerable instances proved the truth of that blessed declaration: "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

It was thought prudent not to commence begging for the debt of our chapel till I had preached two Lord's days. On the Monday morning that I was to go out with my case, I felt a strong spirit of prayer to the Lord, knowing that the gold and silver and the cattle upon a thousand hills were his, and that all hearts were in his hands, that he could turn them as the rivers of water whithersoever he pleased. I supplicated earnestly that he, as the Breaker, would cause his goodness to go before me in the way, and that whatever unkind treatment I might meet with, he would enable me to stand my ground and give the soft answer that turneth away wrath, and not to be suffered to use the grievous words which stir up strife.

I soon found three things made very much against me. It was the month of August, and many I was recommended to call upon were from home, at some watering-place. Many lived at great distances from one another, and, being a stranger, I often lost my way, and experienced great difficulty in finding them. St. Paul's Cathedral often proved a landmark to me. I travelled the streets with blistered feet, ready to faint with hunger and thirst, being afraid to increase my expenses, and thus diminish what I got from begging. I never turned aside into an eating-house to get anything, but sometimes obtained refreshment at the houses I called at. Several times, after being refused money, I said, "Will you entertain a stranger with a little food for the body, as I am quite faint and worn down with labour?" In this I always succeeded, and it gave an opportunity for conversation on spiritual things, which so opened their hearts that before I left they have said, "Let us see your begging book; we must give you some money; and if you come this way again, be sure and call and get some refresh-

ment." The Baptist Board was a strong bulwark that I had to contend with. I soon found out that these gentlemen of the board (to use their own term) had united to set their faces against what they called irregular cases, which had not come before their committee and obtained their sanction; so that when I presented my case, the reply was, "This is an irregular case, and I am a board man; so I shall do nothing for you." This being the case, long before I finished I made few calls upon board men; but candour compels me to state that there were honourable exceptions.

Some time before I left London, I was very much pressed by some friends to call upon a gentleman who was said to be "exceedingly pious, and very rich and benevolent." I inquired if he was a board man. The reply was, "Yes." I objected to go; but being so kindly entreated and assured of success, I went. He inquired my business. I gave him my book; and he, having looked the case carefully over, returned it, saying, "This is a Baptist case for the debt of a chapel. If I had more money than I knew what to do with, so that it was running out of my pocket, I should not give you a farthing." "What!" said I, "because I am a Baptist, and begging for the debt on our chapel, you will give me nothing?" He replied, "No; that is not it. I am a Baptist, and am regularly giving my money to support the Baptist cause; but I am a board man; and this is an irregular case, and we have bound ourselves to set our faces against all such cases. Why did not you present your case to the committee of our board, and obtain our sanction? Then you would have got our money." I told him I should be very sorry to do so, and that the first day I went out with my case, a friend put into my hands the report of their Baptist Board for the previous year, in which there was an account of all the cases that had been brought before them and obtained their sanction, and what they had got. There was one church that had got as much as ninety pounds, and some obtained only forty, and that I had already got a hundred and fifty in good sovereigns, and expected before I left to make the amount two hundred. "Do you not, therefore, think I should have acted foolishly to have sought the sanction of your board, of which you make such a boast, and only obtain such paltry sums as mentioned in your last report?" He said, "You would; but where have

you been to get so much money?" I made answer, "I have got the names of board ministers and board men in my book, some of whom have given me money without my asking them." At this he was angry, and said they were not faithful men, and much wished to see my book again to ascertain who they were; but I refused, saying, "I am not going to betray my friends." After a little more conversation, we parted very friendly, he being convinced that I was not so irregular as he thought.

It is with pleasure that I state I never received any unkind treatment from those that heard me preach, several of whom gave me £5, some £3, £2, and many £1, ten shillings, and five shillings, according to their ability; for trade and commerce at that time were not good. The business of begging, and preaching four and five nights in the week, I found to be the hardest work I ever had.

The Lord, knowing my labours would be abundant, provided for me a comfortable lodging. The third Lord's day, when I came out of the pulpit into the vestry, a friend put a note into my hand, saying, "You are requested to call upon the person named in this note to-morrow morning." I replied, "I do not know either the person or the place." The senior deacon said, "You know where I live. Call upon me and I will go with you." I did as he requested. As we were walking along, he said, "The people where you are going are very kind, humble people; master, mistress, and servant are members of our church." He conducted me to the house of Mr. Thomas Davies, 88, corner of Jewry Street, Aldgate, who kept a large shop for the sale of carpets and other articles of a similar kind. He very kindly took me by the hand, saying, "Mr. Kershaw, you are from the country, and your present lodgings being in Commercial Road, which is a very great thoroughfare both day and night, we are afraid you cannot sleep so well, because of the noise. We have a comfortable bed in a good back room, and we shall be glad if you will come and live with us for a week. Such as we have you shall be welcome to." I promised to do so, and was introduced to Mrs. Davies, whom I found, though quite a lady in her manners, to be a humble God-fearing woman. This was a very kind providence to me, as in my former lodgings I found my own provisions, and had a room to myself, and when at home had no one

with whom I could hold communion. The accommodation also was but indifferent; so that I firmly believe if I had remained there I could not have endured the labour I had to go through. How thankful I felt to the Lord for providing me such a place as Mr. Davies's, making me manifest in their souls as one of his sent servants, and constraining them to think it a privilege to entertain one of the King's ambassadors. Every attention was paid to my comfort.

On the Sabbath day before my week was completed as we sat at tea, Mrs. Davies said to me, "You have not told us how you like living with us." I replied, "I like it very well, and have felt very thankful to the Lord for inclining your hearts to send for me, an unworthy stranger, to reside under your hospitable roof; and I am very thankful to you as the Lord's instruments for my comfort." Mr. Davies then said, "We sent for you because we loved you for your Master's sake, and felt our hearts inclined to do all we could to make you comfortable. You see how we live, and if you are satisfied, bed and board are yours as long as you stay in London, stay as long as you may."

I lived with these kind people at sundry times, when supplying at Zoar Chapel, fifty-two weeks. My first stay with them was nine weeks. I hope never to forget the kind attention I received from Mrs. Davies and Mary Buck, their servant. When I had come from the chapel on a Lord's day evening, with not a dry hair on my head, my shirt wet with profuse perspiration, the mistress would have a cordial for me to drink, a warm handkerchief for my head, and the servant a warm shirt for my back. Such was my exhaustion on these occasions that I had to lie down for a time on the sofa to rest before I could take my supper. In this family I had not only comfort for the body, but for the soul, especially in our family devotions and Christian conversation. Living with Mr. Davies was also a great help to me in my begging business, as he could give me much information about the people whom I was recommended to call upon, where they lived, and the best time to see them. It was also a help to me in another sense; for when it was known by many that I was living with Mr. Davies, they came forward the more willingly to help me, as he had long lived in the city, and was well known as an honourable man. On some occasions I had openings to preach on a

Lord's day afternoon, and had a collection for my case, when Mr. Davies always went me, and brought back the money. All that I got, either publicly or privately, he took to the bank weekly, along with his own; and when I had completed my mission, he got a cheque upon the branch bank at Manchester, where I drew the money.

When I had lived with these kind people several weeks, one evening before I left the vestry of Zoar Chapel the deacons said, "Brother Kershaw, we are not satisfied about your lodgings." I said, "Why not?" and told them I could not be better satisfied." They replied, "As a minister of Jesus Christ you are not serving Mr. and Mrs. Davies more than us and the rest of the people, and we do not see but they ought to be paid. We know that they are ever forward to support the cause, but your stay is much longer than was expected." I told them I thought as they did; but after what Mr. and Mrs. Davies had said to me, I could not interfere in the business. The deacons then said, "We do not wish to give offence, but, as the officers of the church, do that which we deem to be our duty." On the Monday night, when I returned to Mr. D.'s, Mr. Davies said to me, "You had not been long gone this morning when the deacons came about your lodgings. They were very kind, saying they did not wish to give occasion for any offence, but they must do their duty; and thinking that we ought to be paid by the church for your board and lodging, they had called to make some arrangements. We told them that when we invited you to our house it was because we loved you for the truth's sake, and that we never intended to receive anything for it; but so far from being offended, we were obliged to them for coming. We also told them that we thought with them that the church ought to do something; and as you had come to London in your best coat, and were wearing it every day whilst going about with your begging case, it had begun to look the worse for wear, and was not fit to appear in the pulpit on the Lord's day, adding, 'It would be doing us a pleasure if the church would provide you with a new coat.' On hearing this, Mr. Pedley very cheerfully replied, 'My good lady was making the same remark this morning at our breakfast table. Tell him not to go out to-morrow morning till the tailor has been to measure him for a new suit of clothes.'" The

tailor accordingly came, and told me he should bring them the following Saturday. So my dear Lord and Master, who clothed the grass which is in the field, clothed me with the best suit I had ever worn, without my taking thought for myself. The Lord be praised for his goodness to the children of men, and to me in particular, a poor, sinful, polluted worm.

It was a great trial to me when Mr. Davies retired from business and went to reside at Luton for some time, and eventually settled at St. Alban's, Herts. They had an only son, a little boy when I first went to them. This youth and I became much attached to each other. He was often with me when I went amongst the friends. His parents were very fond of him, as he was their only child living. His name was William, and, like my William to me, I fear he was too much their idol. He fell into a consumption in the spring of 1848, in the 22nd year of his age. His parents, finding he was in a dying state, sent for me to go immediately, but did not say for what they wanted me till I got there; when his mother told me, with great grief, that their dear William was in a dying state, but that he believed he should get better, and that they had sent for me to be faithful and honest with him, and to have some conversation with him upon spiritual and eternal things. As soon as convenient I had a private interview with him. We first spoke of the affliction of his body. He said, "You see it is the month of April, and the wind keeps very cold. When May comes in and I can walk in the fields and have the benefit of the air and warm weather, I shall soon be better." With feelings of affection I addressed him as follows: "My dear William, you know I have loved you from your being a little boy, and we have had much intercourse together. Your welfare lies near my heart. I have also had many proofs of your affection for me, and should be very glad, if it was the Lord's will, to see you restored to health and your life long spared, for the sake of your dear parents, for I know that, like Jacob, they feel their life bound up in yours. The Lord enable you to bear what I am from duty and affection bound to communicate to you. Your complaint is of a flattering nature. I have known young men with the same disease who have thought they should recover till the very day of their death. Your medical attendant,

although he speaks flatteringly to you, tells your parents he has no hope of your recovery, and they daily perceive your cough gets worse, and that your bodily strength is rapidly decreasing. Mr. Upton, their minister, has spoken to them of the necessity of your being made acquainted with the fact that you are in dying circumstances, upon the brink of the grave, with eternity before you. He very kindly offered to make these things known to you himself; for which they thanked him, but told him that as an old friend of theirs was then supplying in London, one with whom you were very familiar, they would rather send for him to communicate the solemn and important information. You and I have had many conversations upon spiritual and eternal things, and I have reason to believe, from what you have said, the Lord has made you acquainted with your lost state and condition as a sinner, and your need of Jesus Christ and his finished salvation." I then went on to inquire how things stood between the Lord and his soul. In reply, he said, "I have been the subject of many fears and temptations, and my only hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ." I was astonished at the fortitude with which he received the intelligence of his approaching end. We had three conversations that day, as the strength of his body would allow.

Next day, being Saturday, I was in my study, when he came to me and shut the door, saying, "Mr. Kershaw, before you and I have any conversation this morning, let us kneel down before the Lord and pray. I will pray first and you afterwards." I hope never to forget the humble, solemn manner he poured out his heart and soul before the Lord in confessing his sin and sinfulness, pleading for peace and pardon through the blood of the Lamb, and that his precious soul might be found sheltered in Christ, the Rock of Ages, thanking the Lord for sending his ministering servant to deal faithfully with him, and to comfort his soul with the consolations of his salvation, and beseeching the Lord to support the minds of his parents, and to enable them to give him up, by reconciling their minds to his wise though trying dispensations towards them. I have often been sorry that his parents had not the opportunity of hearing this prayer, as it might have tended to soothe their sorrow. I stayed with them till evening, when I took my leave of

him. We were both much affected, being aware we should see each other's face no more. At that time we were enlarging our chapel, and he would give me a sovereign, and write his name in my book, as his last token of respect. He lived till May 15th, 1848. His death was a heavy blow to his parents, as his prospects for this world were bright. Whatever the feelings and desires of parents may be concerning their children, the will of the Lord must be done. It is well to be enabled to say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." I carry about with me daily a token of this young man which often puts me in remembrance of him. The first time I visited his parents after his death, his mother brought out a small gold seal, with "William" engraved upon it. With tears she said, "You have lost your William, and we have lost ours, and you shall have this seal upon your watch chain, and wear it for his sake." I promised her I would, and she put it on with her own hands, and I have worn it ever since. His parents and their old servant who lived with them forty years have now been dead several years.

The first day I went out with my case I called upon Mr. Silver, who for many years resided near Buckingham Palace. He received me very kindly, gave me a sovereign, and the names of several of his friends whom he thought would be favourable to my case. A friendship was formed between us that day that was never broken to the day of his death. We met many times and preached together. From him I received many favours, both for myself and my poor friends. On one occasion we were together for some time at Brighton. The conversations we had with each other were very edifying, and in many things have been useful to me ever since. I was with him at his own house not long before he died, and found him and his aged partner, a mother in Israel, rejoicing in "hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

It requires great firmness, patience, and perseverance, and much of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, to go out with a begging case, as will appear from the following narrations. Mr. Silver gave me the name of a gentleman who he said was very rich. I found him in his drawing-room much engaged. After a

little delay, he lifted up his head and sharply said, "Well, Sir, what is your business?" I gave him my book, saying, "That will inform you, Sir." When he had looked it over, he said, "This is a begging case for the debt of a Particular Baptist chapel?" I said, "Yes, it is." He then said, "If I was at Rochdale on your ordinance day, would you allow me to sit down with you at the Lord's table?" I replied, "Yes, if you follow the example of Christ and his apostles, and be baptized in the name of the Lord;" when he very warmly inquired, "How is this? You come here to ask me for money, and would not allow me to sit down with you at the Lord's table. Such a spirit would shut me out of heaven; but this you cannot do." I told him I had no desire to shut him out of heaven; but, as the servant of the Lord, I wished to keep the ordinances as they were delivered to us in the scriptures, and that I could not find a single instance in the word of God where any were admitted to the Lord's table but such as had been baptized upon a profession of their faith in Christ Jesus; but if he could produce me Bible authority to admit him, he should sit down with us. Such authority he could not produce, but kindly said, "Well, Sir, I believe you are an honest man, and firm to your principles, and will not give up what you consider to be the truth of God for the sake of my gold. Here is a sovereign for you." I thanked him, and we parted very friendly.

One evening, when I got home to my friends at Aldgate, I found a letter from Mr. Heap, informing me that he was engaged to preach the following day, in the afternoon, at an anniversary at the Baptist chapel, Somers Town; that he was so poorly he could not attend, and requested me to go and preach in his stead. He also sent a letter for me to take and give to Mr. Carpenter, the minister. I was much exercised in my mind about taking my friend's place, as I was a stranger, knowing there would be many ministers and people assembled together. A little before the time, I found the place, and was told that the ministers and friends were in a large room, where they had dined. I requested a friend to call Mr. Carpenter out, and I gave him Mr. Heap's letter, when he returned to his friends, leaving me in the street. Shortly after, he came again with Mr. Joseph Irons, and two or three other ministers, whom I did not know,

saying to me, "So Mr. Heap is poorly and cannot come, and has sent you to preach in his stead." I replied, "I have received a letter from him to that effect; but as I am a stranger, and you have many abler ministers of Jesus Christ here, I shall esteem it a favour if you will release me, and fix upon some other better known and more able to preach than I am." I hopenever to for get the kindness shown to me on this occasion by Mr. Irons. He said, "Brother Kershaw, in the providence of God, our friend Heap is not able to come, and has sent you. I feel for you. I was thinking of returning home, as it is my preaching night; but I will stop and hear you. Come, I will take you into the vestry, where you will be quiet." When we got there he said, "There is your Bible; the Lord be with and bless you. When you hear the hymn given out, go into the pulpit." I sat more than half-an-hour, very trembling and fearful, crying to the Lord to be with me, according to his promise: "Lo, I am with you always." I heard the clerk give out the number of the hymn, and read the first verse:

> "Hail, sovereign love, that first began
> The scheme to rescue fallen man;
> Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
> That gave my soul a hiding-place!"

With sweet power and savour the above lines dropped into my soul, and with these feelings I entered the pulpit. I felt sweet liberty in prayer. Before the sermon, I addressed the people as follows: "I have no doubt many of you will be greatly disappointed in not seeing Mr. Heap in the pulpit; but, I can assure you, none so much as I am, as I have been pleasing myself with the anticipation of to-day hearing Mr. Irons in the morning, and Mr. Heap this afternoon; but in consequence of Mr. Heap's indisposition I am unexpectedly called to take his place." I exhorted them to look beyond the "earthen vessel" to the great Head of the church, and beseech him to command a blessing that we might be comforted and edified together.

I called their attention to Deut. xxxiii. 3: "Yea, he loved the people. All his saints are in thy hand. They sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." I spoke of the love of God to his people, the safety of the saints in the Lord's hands, their sitting down at the feet of the Lord, and receiving of his gracious words, as I had felt it

in my own soul. My heart was enlarged, my lips were touched with a live coal from off the altar. I could see from the countenances of both ministers and people that the word had free course and was glorified. In conclusion, it being an anniversary, I pleaded their cause, and they had a good collection. Inquiry was made by many who I was and from whence I came. They were told I came from Lancashire, and was begging for the debt of our chapel. Hearing this, several came into the vestry to give me money for my own case. Mr. Irons went home with the love of God enjoyed in his own soul, and told his people that evening the blessing he had enjoyed that day in hearing a Lancashire minister. I saw the hand of the Lord in opening this door for me, both in providence and grace, as I unexpectedly got help at Somers Town, and what Mr. Irons said to his people caused many to come and hear me at Zoar Chapel, and opened their hearts to receive me when I went amongst them.

Mr. Richard Pope, one of Mr. Irons's deacons, sent me a list of the names of some of the friends he thought would help me. With some difficulty I prevailed upon an old retired tradesman to accompany me, and show me their houses, as he knew all the persons I was to call upon. He, however, would not enter the houses with me. He took me to the gate of the house of Mr. Reynolds. I was introduced into the dining-room, the family had just dined. I told him I had reason to make an apology for intruding upon them, especially as I appeared in the humble capacity of a beggar. He replied, "Are you come to thank me for what I have already given you, or to ask for more?" Looking earnestly at him, I said, "Sir, I think I have seen you before, but cannot tell where; but sure I am I have not the name of Reynolds in my book." He said, "No, you have not my name; but I heard you preach at Mr. Savory's, Brighton; and when you stated your case from the pulpit, I felt it my duty with others to go into the vestry, and laid down a sovereign on the table." I then said, "I had some recollection of you. I do not ask you for more; but thank you for what you have already given me." He invited me to take some refreshment, and told me he was glad I had called, that he was born and brought up at Cottingly, near Bradford, a distance of not more than

24 miles from Rochdale. I told him I could not stay, as I had a Mr. Weelton waiting for me in the road to show me the houses I had to call at. He replied, "I know him. He is a good man, but rather timid. Go and tell him to go home, and you come here next Monday morning, and I will go with you to the houses."

When the time came I went. As we left his house, he said, "The first place we shall go to is my landlord's, in Cold Harbour Lane. He is very rich, but rather close-fisted;" by which I was led to understand that what he had got he was eager to keep. When we arrived, the servant informed us that her master was not at home. My friend then asked to see her mistress. She came, and he stated my case, and pleaded my cause; but all was in vain, as she said she never gave anything to such cases when her husband was from home. He would be in to dinner at one o'clock. I might call then if I thought proper, but she thought it would be of little use, as her husband did not like to encourage such cases. We then bade her good morning, and went to several places in the neighbourhood, and got on better than I expected.

About one o'clock my friend said, "You shall call again upon my landlord. I must go home, and you must follow me and be at my house at two o'clock to dinner." I went and rang the gate bell. The servant came to let me in. I saw from her manner she understood the business, and anticipated what kind of reception I was about to meet with. As soon as I entered the hall, the gentleman came out of the dining-room with far more of the fierceness of the lion than the gentleness of the lamb. His first words were, "Well, Sir, you are a beggar, and as I shall neither look at your book, nor hear anything that you have got to say, nor give you anything, I say at once begone." Conscious that I was no impostor, I felt it my duty to stand my ground, and, looking earnestly at him, I said, "Sir, whether you give me anything or not, let us not part in this abrupt and unkind manner." "O, Sir," said he, "as I shall give you nothing, it is best to cut it short; for I have given so much that I have become quite tired of giving, and must and will give over." I told him I was sorry to hear him say so, as he was getting an old man with eternity before him. I hoped he read his Bible, and I knew the minister he heard

preached the truth. He said, "God forbid that I should be a day and not read my Bible, and our minister preaches the truth; but what has that to do with your begging case?" I replied, "My Bible says, 'But to do good and communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;' and it also says, 'Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' According to your own statement you have been giving much, but now you are for fainting before the harvest time comes." "Ah, ah!" said he; "but do you not see my hand cannot be constantly going into my pocket but my money is going? I must look out and take care for myself, as I do not know what we may need." I made answer, "My Bible says more than this: 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.' (Prov. xi. 24.) From what you say, you have been scattering, and the Lord hath greatly increased you, so that you are a living witness of the truth of the former part of the passage. But now you say you are for withholding more than is meet; and if you do so and your property begins to decrease, I shall be very sorry when I come to London again to hear that, in consequence of your withholding, your property is decreasing." He stood and looked at me with amazement, and I looked at him, waiting for his reply. For some moments all was silent. At length the old lady, who had been so shy with me in the morning, and had heard all that passed, perceiving that we were at a complete stand, very kindly said, "If you please, Sir, walk this way." Her husband, who only a few minutes before bade me very angrily to be gone, now politely showed me into the room. They kindly invited me to dine with them. I told them I was much obliged to them, but I was engaged to dine with our mutual friend Mr. Reynolds at two o'clock. They invited me to take a glass of wine with them, which I did. As I sat at the table, knowing I had got their ear, I thought it prudent to waive, for a time, the immediate object of my visit, and began to talk about the beautiful houses, good roads, and delightful neighbourhood which surrounded them. I soon found that the word of the Lord, which he had given me "at that hour" to speak unto them, had faster hold of their minds than these outward things; for in a short time the lady said,

"Will you allow us to look at your begging book?" I pulled it out of my pocket and gave it to her. After looking at it in a cursory way, she gave it to her husband, saying, "This is a true case, and he is an honest, good man. We must give him something." Smilingly he said, "Yes, I am sure he is honest and true, or he would never have stood the storm he has." Looking at me, he proceeded to say, "You Lancashire men are fit to turn out. You will take them some sovereigns to Rochdale." I told him I came for that purpose. He further said, when his wife informed him that Mr. Reynolds had been with a beggar, the impression of his mind was that I was an impostor that was deceiving his neighbour, but that I should not deceive him; and for that reason he bade begone. They gave me their money with the greatest freedom, and invited me, whenever I came to London again, to be sure and visit them, as they should always be glad to see me. This I fully intended doing, for, notwithstanding his roughness, I could see in him many things that made a favourable impression on my mind. But the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. Before I went again to London, the Lord had very suddenly called him home to himself by a fit of apoplexy and his widow went to reside in the country. This information I received from his brother, Mr Richard Howard, of Walworth, at whose house I slept many times when preaching in that neighbourhood. He was a true and faithful friend to me for nearly thirty years. I received many temporal favours from him, and every Christmas, for many years, he sent me £5 for the poor.

MY FIRST VISIT TO BRIGHTON.

One day Mr. Heap said to me, "I have a few friends down at Brighton to whom I can recommend you. I hope they will help you." He gave me the names of several, and amongst the rest that of Mr. Smith, of Bedford Square, saying, "If you can make this man your friend, he will be a great help to you." The Monday morning on which I was to go I was much cast down at the thoughts of my journey. I had been begging in London four weeks, and had met with so much unkind treatment from persons that did not know

me, and anticipating that I should not see a person at Brighton that I knew, I expected to meet with similar treatment there.

Before I set off, according to my usual practice, I went into my closet to beseech the Lord to go with me. Whilst engaged in prayer, I remembered the saying of my friend Heap, that if I could make Mr. Smith my friend I should have the benefit of it. I told the Lord all hearts were in his hand, from the king upon the throne to the meanest subject in the land, and that he could turn them as the rivers of water. The circumstance of Jacob sending his sons the second time into Egypt to buy corn was brought very encouragingly to my mind; when he said unto his sons, "Arise, go again unto the man, and God Almighty give you mercy before the man." I saw that the dear old patriarch Jacob had his heart and eyes up unto the Lord, who had power to incline the heart of the man who was the lord of the land (little thinking it was his dear son Joseph) to deal kindly with his sons. In like manner, I told the Lord that Mr. Smith's heart was in his hand, and that he could dispose him to receive me kindly. Thus I wrestled with the Lord, till I felt assured that he would grant me the desire of my heart. I read Gen. xliii., and was enabled to commit my journey to Brighton into the Lord's hands.

I left London outside the coach at ten o'clock. It was a fine day, and we had a beautiful ride. When we arrived at Brighton, before I had properly alighted, an aged person inquired if I wanted lodgings. I told him that I had to go to Bedford Square. Finding I was a stranger, he engaged to go with me and show me the place. As we were walking along, I told him that I should be obliged to him, when I had seen the gentleman, if he could take me to a private house, where I could be comfortably accommodated at reasonable expense. He promised to do so, and that he would wait for me till I was at liberty to go. When we got to the square, I found Mr. Smith's house was in the centre, facing the sea. As I rang the bell my heart began again to fail me. The footman opened the door, and informed me his master was at home. As I wanted to see him, he asked my name and address, and showed me into a parlour. He very soon returned, saying, "My master is

engaged with a party of friends, and cannot be seen to-night. You must come to-morrow morning." Feeling that I should be very miserable if I did not see him before the morning, I told him I should be much obliged to him if he would return to his master and tell him that I should esteem it a great favour if I could see him before I went away, if it was only for a few minutes. He kindly delivered my message, and returned saying, "My master will shortly be with you." I sat in great suspense for ten or fifteen minutes, when I heard the footsteps of a heavy man coming quickly down stairs. He entered the room rather fiercely, saying, "Sir, what is your business?" I replied, "With your leave I will tell you." As soon as I opened my mouth to tell him who I was, and what I wanted, all the fierceness of the man fell like a mantle, and such an affectionate, childlike spirit appeared that greatly encouraged me to be more explicit in in my narration. When I had told him all my tale, he made answer, "According to what you say, you think of staying in Brighton till Friday or Saturday." I told him I did, if I found there was an opening for my case. He inquired where I was going to sleep, when I informed him of the man who was waiting for me at the door, and what had passed between us. He said, "Are you aware what kind of hands you may fall into?" He went to the door and examined the man as to where he was going to take me, and told him I was not to go with him. Hearing this, I went to the door, and paid him for his trouble. When we returned into the room, to my great surprise, he put on his former appearance of fierceness, saying, "Did not I send you word that I could not be seen to-day, as I was engaged with some friends, and you were to come to-morrow morning at nine o'clock?" I said, "Yes." "Why, then, did not you go away and come again in the morning?" I replied, "To tell you the truth, I got too fast hold of you this morning before I left London to be put off with one denial." "You got hold of me before you left London this morning, which is more than fifty miles from here! How can that be possible? Explain yourself." I told him I was quite prepared to do so, and proceeded to give him the relation of my entrance into my closet that morning to plead with the Lord, who had the hearts of all men in his hand, to dispose him to receive me and treat me kindly; when the words of

Jacob were brought with power and sweetness to my mind, as before related. When I had told him all about it, rubbing his hands, he said, "Ah, my dear friend, the thing is of God, for I came down stairs with the impression on mind that you were an impostor, come to pick my pocket as many have done, and I was determined to be quit of you at once; but as soon as you began to open your mouth, I felt that you spoke with the humility and solemnity of a man that feared God, for the savour of what you said entered into my soul with power; so that I could not put you away." He rang the bell, and the footman coming, he said, "Charles, the gentleman has had no dinner. Spread the table; bring the beef; for I am sure he is hungry." And truly I was, as it was getting towards five o'clock, and I had taken nothing since my breakfast at eight o'clock that morning. We soon got into conversation upon the Lord's dealings with our precious souls, the glorious Person and work of Christ, and the blessings of grace and salvation treasured up in him. He remained with me till the bell rang for tea; when I was introduced to his party of friends, six or seven in number, amongst whom was my esteemed friend and brother minister Mr. Joseph Sedgwick. As we sat at tea, our kind host addressed me as follows: "Mr. Kershaw, of all the Lord's family I often think I have the greatest reason to be humble and thankful to the Lord, who hath blessed me with an abundance of the good things of this life. My dear wife, although confined to a sick bed, is in the sweet enjoyment of a good hope through grace; we have a female in the family as housekeeper who fears God; and if my own evil heart does not deceive me, I know something of a precious Christ for myself. Here are my two daughters and a son-in-law. As a parent I love them; their welfare lies near my heart. Many prayers have their dear mother and myself offered up to God for them that they may know Christ for themselves, whom to know is eternal life; but as yet there is no evidence of it. Our prayers may be answered when our bodies are sleeping in the dust, and our immortal spirits have joined the spirits of just men made perfect before the throne of God and the Lamb." Addressing himself to his daughters and son-in-law, he said, "My dear children, much as I love you, I feel a greater union of soul to this stranger than I do to you."

To which one of his daughters replied, "O no, father, that cannot be. Your kindness to us as a parent ever since we have had any recollection of you forbids us to think it can be possible for you to have a greater love to this stranger, who has not been in the house more than two hours, than you have to us." He replied, "Ah, my dear child, you do not understand it. Would to God you did. The union that exists between you and me, as parent and children, is natural, and in death will for ever be dissolved (Matt. xxii. 30); but the union that exists between this stranger and me is a spiritual union that neither life nor death, time nor eternity, will ever dissolve." When I heard this, my soul said, "Truly the Lord hath heard my prayer, and given me favour in the eyes of the man."

It was the prayer-meeting at Mr. Sedgwick's chapel that night, and it was agreed that I should go with them, and give a word of exhortation, as it would introduce me to the friends. When the time came, Mr. Smith's carriage was at the door to take us. I looked at it, and at him. He said, "Get in; get in." As we rode along the West Cliff, I thought, "This is rather an unusual state of things for a poor beggar."

After the service I was taken by another friend to supper, and from thence to the house where the ministers that occasionally supplied slept. Before we went to bed, my friend said, "Did you notice the young lady that played the piano when we sang the hymn before prayer?" I replied I did. He added, "She neither knows father nor mother, sister nor brother. When a babe she was taken in a basket and left upon the doorstep of the house where we have been, and like Moses was adopted by two ladies who lived there." She afterwards became a member of Mr. Sedgwick's church. How mysterious are the dispensations of divine providence.

The next day I was advised by the friends to go to Lewes and visit Mr. Vinall, and obtain his sanction to go amongst his people at Brighton. He received me very kindly. I heard him preach a blessed sermon from Ps. xii. 5, and slept at his house. He very kindly gave me half a sovereign and signed my case, which I found to be of great service to me, as his influence was great amongst his people at Brighton. I returned to Brighton and preached on the

Wednesday night for Mr. Savory, and on the Thursday for Mr. Sedgwick, and was allowed to state my case from the pulpits; £3 7s. 3d. was brought into the vestry at Salem Chapel, Bond Street, and £4 14s. 6d. at Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Hill.

On the Friday morning, Mr. Smith went with me round to a few friends. He told me another minister had been to his house with a begging case, who said he heard my two sermons and very much approved of them, adding, "I thought if he liked the truths you preached he must be a man of God, and I gave him a sovereign, telling him that Mr. Sedgwick, Mr. Savory, and several other friends were going to meet you, and dine with me to-day. I invited him to come, and he accepted of the invitation." I saw the old gentleman was anticipating a pleasant meeting and good Christian conversation tending to godly edifying. At the time appointed a goodly number sat down to dinner, including the above named minister. Soon after we had dined, Mr. Sedgwick called me into another room, and said to me, "Mr. Savory and I are very much dissatisfied with this man. You must have noticed, as well as we, his extravagance at dinner, the quantity of ale he drank, and how he is now drinking wine; and moreover he has been begging amongst our people without coming to us, and showing his begging book, and obtaining our sanction, as you have done. We have our fears that he is an impostor, and wish you to adopt some plan by which we can see his book, for we can make no freedom with him till we know more about him; so I leave it with you to take what course you think best." He then left me to consider the matter. I felt myself for a short time in a strait as to what course to take; when a circumstance was brought to my mind which I saw would lead to the thing desired. I entered the room, and said, "Friends, a circumstance has been brought to my mind which took place some time since; and as it has been profitable to me, with your leave I will relate it, hoping you will derive equal benefit." (I was requested to proceed with the narration.) "I set off on a Monday to preach at Bradford in the evening, on the Tuesday at Halifax, on the Wednesday at Hebden Bridge, returning home on the Thursday. When about half-way I met a decently-dressed man, who looked earnestly at me and took me by the hand,

saying, 'My friend, if you will tell me how old you are, I will tell you how old I am.' I told him my age, when he replied, 'I was fifty-five last Michaelmas; and when a man gets that age, it is getting tea-time with him. It will soon be night with me; and I shall be dead and gone.' And with much feeling and tears he added, 'What will become of my poor soul?' Letting loose of my hand, he left me. The solemn manner in which he spoke made a deep impression on my mind, especially that sentence, 'What will become of my poor soul?' which has often been a solemn inquiry with me. And so it was with Job, who said, 'Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?' My dear friends, we ministers sometimes feel it expedient to make a few introductory observations before we take our text; and having done so on the present occasion, I now come to mine. In the providence of God, my brother beggar and I have met here to-day; and I say to him as the man said to me in the road, 'If you will show me your begging book, I will show you mine,'" at the same time laying my book on the table before him. This produced considerable sensation among the friends, the more so when they saw it threw the man into a state of confusion. The first words he uttered were, "Far-fetched, deep-laid scheme." A silence ensued, and all eyes were fixed upon him. At length he produced his book, and gave it me, taking up mine. I looked at it in a cursory way, and gave it to the ministers who were so anxious to see it, who soon found it was not a true and worthy case. I shall not attempt to describe the confusion that followed. Our expected comfortable meeting ended in pain and distress, in the midst of which the man abruptly left, when the question arose: "What is to be done to put a stop to his career?" Our meeting was broken up, one going one way and another some other, in order to find him; but he was not to be found. I cannot forget the grief of our kind host that such a painful circumstance should have occurred, putting an end to the anticipated pleasure of hearing good conversation on the things of God.

Having previously promised Mr. Hannington (a gentle- who had greatly befriended me in my begging business) that I would make him another call, I went that evening and told him what had taken place; when he told me the same

person had been to him, and told him how his soul had been blessed in hearing me preach in Bond Street chapel on Wednesday night, and having found the sermon good to his own soul, he gave him a sovereign, and added, "But I have been told since that he went to a house where they were not favourable to the truths we maintain, and found fault with your sermon, and got a sovereign from them, which is another proof that he is not an honest man."

I have felt some hesitation in my mind in narrating this this painful circumstance; but on consideration that it may be useful to the people of God, who need the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove, in exercising caution as to whom they support, I have inserted it.

MY RETURN TO LONDON.

I LEFT Brighton the following morning for London, taking with me the liberal contributions of the friends to my case; and as I had been sowing spiritual things amongst them, I reaped of their carnal things. After I got on the coach, money was brought me. I returned with a thankful heart to the Lord, who had in so signal a manner made me manifest in the souls of his people as one of his sent servants, causing his goodness to pass before me in the way.

My reader will recollect that my first engagement to supply at Zoar Chapel, London, was for four Lord's days, a Mr. Smith, then of Cheltenham, being engaged for two Lord's days after me. As my labours had been so acceptable amongst them, and doors still opening for my begging case, my people at Rochdale consented for me to commence my labours again at Zoar for five Lord's days more. This arrangement gave me two Lord's days to supply other places, on the first of which I preached at the anniversary of Mr. Wollicot's chapel, Westminister, from Song vi. 3: "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." I felt the truths I delivered sweet and savoury to my own soul, and I believe the Lord was with us; for the people were very attentive, and their souls evidently fed upon the word. In the afternoon I administered the ordinance of the Lord's supper to the church at Zoar, having Mr. Smith with me at the table. We were very comfortable together. This was the only time I saw him, though he afterwards settled for

a time at Park Street chapel, after the death of Dr. Rippon. In the evening I preached at Bury Street, St. Mary Axe.

The following Lord's day morning I preached at Red Cross Street for dear old Mr. Franklin, who was then in a declining state. I also preached for him on a Wednesday evening, as my friend Mr. Gadsby requested me to assist him as much as I could. The next Lord's day evening I preached again at Bury Street, to enable Mr. Heap to preach for John Rees, of Crown Street chapel, who, like Mr. Franklin, was far advanced in years, and unable to fulfil his labours.

Bury Street chapel had been enlarged backwards, and there was a kind of bridge from the vestry to the pulpit. At the time of service Mrs. Heap said, "It is now time for you to go into the pulpit," and she opened the vestry door. When I saw the people I felt as if I should have fainted; but when in prayer I was set at liberty, as I had sweet access to the Lord, and precious promises dropped into my soul, like refreshing dew. My text was Eph. iii. 8: "The unsearchable riches of Christ." I hope never to forget the life, light, power, savour, and liberty I felt in my own soul on that occasion. I had the savour of the truths then delivered upon my spirit for many days. Many times I have been stopped in the streets by persons I did not know, who have said, "Have you forgotten Bury Street and preaching from 'The unsearchable riches of Christ?'" I have replied, "No;" and they have said, "Neither have we, and hope we never shall;" and with a few moments' conversation a little of the sweetness has been felt again, and we have had a second benefit. These things are refreshing, being like the bread cast upon the waters, seen after many days.

While speaking of these things, I well remember being favoured in like manner on another occasion, when preaching on a Lord's day afternoon in Cumberland Street chapel, Bishopsgate, it being a Sunday school anniversary. My text was 1 Kings xiv. 13. The good thing that was found in young Abijah toward the Lord God of Israel was the groundwork of my discourse. The presence and power of the Lord were much enjoyed both by the speaker and hearers, and many have been the signs that have followed the preaching of the word on that occasion, which I occa-

sionally heard of for years afterwards. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for such manifested favours to a poor, unworthy, trembling, weak, and helpless worm, who hath put the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God and not of us.

The following Lord's day, after preaching at Bury Street chapel, as above named, I commenced my labours again at Zoar. I was much helped in preaching and the people blessed in hearing; so that I began to be very much pressed to become their stated minister, my friend Mr. Heap encouraging them in it, saying that I was the man for them, and he should much like me for a neighbour. He also frequently spoke to me on the subject, urging that there was a much larger field of usefulness for me in the metropolis than at Rochdale. Tidings of these things reached Rochdale, causing great jealousy and unkind feelings amongst my friends at home against the people in London, and a sharp letter came reproving them for attempting to rob them of their minister. These things placed me in a very unpleasant position; but I was enabled to pursue my path, preaching the word of life, and following the pillar of the cloud in my begging business.

On my last Sabbath at Zoar (although I had been amongst them privately with my book), in the evening, they stood at the door with the plates to gather up the fragments, which amounted to £22 os. 4d. The next Lord's day morning I preached at Red Cross Street chapel. I had been amongst them privately also, but they left upon the plates £5 12s. 6d. In the evening I preached at Bury Street, when the fragments left upon the plates at the doors were £33 10s. 4d. My text on this occasion was John vi. 37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." In speaking upon the certainty of all that the Father had given to Christ coming to him, and proving it from witnesses adduced from the Word of God, I had reference also to persons of more recent date, observing that however far the vessels of mercy might wander from the Lord in the ways of sin and from their own country, when the set time comes to favour Zion, it is as John Bunyan says, in his "Come and Welcome," "'Shall come' lays hold of them, and brings them to the feet of Jesus." I mentioned John Newton, who was far off from

God in the broad and downward road that leads to destruction, far off from his native land, on the coasts of Africa, and as he afterwards styles himself, the African blasphemer; yet the merciful eyes of the Lord were upon him, and at the appointed time "Shall come" laid hold of him, and brought him to the feet of Jesus, as a poor helpless sinner, to be saved by free and sovereign grace; and in his native land raised him up, fitted and qualified him, by his Holy Spirit and grace, to preach the gospel (as he tells us in his writings) "in the parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world." The Lord greatly honoured his ministry, and he "being dead, yet speaketh," in the precious songs so often sung in the assemblies of his saints. After service, an aged, venerable-looking man, with hoary hairs, came into the vestry, saying, "Sir, it did my soul good to hear you mention my dear old pastor John Newton in the manner you did. As I sat and heard you, I said to myself, 'I would to God this Lancashire minister knew the following circumstance, that he could relate it in his homely style, as it would sound well in this congregation, after what he has said about him;' and I am come to tell it to you, that you may relate it on fitting occasions. A few days before he died, two friends called to see him, and inquired how he was. He replied, 'I am going to heaven upon two crutches. My right hand crutch is "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me;" and my left hand crutch is, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."' I thanked the old gentleman for his information. I have often related the circumstance, and it has been a comfort to many.

I would ask my reader, "Art thou leaning on these crutches?" They have long been my stay and support as I travel along in the wilderness; and midst the various trials I have to meet with I do not want any better or firmer, for I know they will never fail.

As I write these things, it is with pleasure I call to mind some of my most valuable friends, whom I have reason to believe are now before the throne of God and the Lamb, in whose conduct and conversation those beautiful lines were exemplified:

> "So let our lips and lives express
> The holy gospel we profess;
> So let our works and virtues shine,
> To prove the doctrine all divine."

They found the precious words of our Lord, "All that the Father giveth me," &c., such a comfort and support to their souls that they have left them as a text for me to preach their funeral sermon from, for the benefit of surviving relatives and friends.

During the time I was in London I delivered the address every Thursday night at Bury Street chapel. A female who was a regular hearer, whose soul had been blest under the word on these occasions, heard of my going amongst the friends with my begging book, and was daily hoping and longing for me to call; and the time of my leaving drawing near, her mind was so distressed about it that her husband spoke to one of my friends, requesting him to take me to his house on the Monday morning. When we entered the house, her husband said to her, "Come, my dear, here is the man, and the book you have so much wished to see and have your name recorded in, along with the rest of the friends." With great pleasure they each gave me a sovereign, and entered their names in my book.

On the evening I took my leave of the dear people at Zoar, I spoke from the words of Paul, in his address to the elders of the church at Ephesus before his departure (Acts xx. 32): "And now, brethren, I commend you to God," &c. First, to God the Father, who has loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. Secondly, to our Lord Jesus Christ, who has also loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, and ever lives to intercede for us. Thirdly, and to God the Holy Ghost, who is the beginner, carrier on, and completer of the work of grace in the souls of his people, landing them safe in glory. Fourthly, and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and is as a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path. In the latter part of my discourse, rehearsing the Lord's goodness towards me while I had been amongst them, both in providence and grace, and thanking them for their great liberality, I told them that I had dined that day with our friend Mr. Heap, who was then with us, and that while coming up the Mile End Road from his house to the chapel, a circumstance had been brought to my mind that I had not thought of for some

years past; and as I hoped to enjoy something of the same when I got home, I would narrate it. It was as follows: "There was formerly at Bradford, in Yorkshire, a Baptist minister of the name of William Crabtree, one of the most eminent men of God in his day, and was over a people fifty years. He lived to the advanced age of ninety years. In his latter days he fell into dotage, yet would occasionally, as formerly, go into the pulpit on a Lord's day afternoon, and would often ramble to bygone days. On one of these occasions, he told them, after they had built the chapel, they sent him to London to beg money towards paying for it, that when he came back he stood before them in the table pew, under the pulpit, to give an account of his journey; and when he had opened his purse and turned out the guineas he had brought them upon the table (pointing to the table pew), he said, 'Ye looked as bright as weasels at me and the guineas.' Now, my dear friends, when my people meet together, and I stand up to give an account unto them of my stewardship and success in my mission to this great city, and turn out of my purse upon the table two hundred and two sovereigns, my Rochdale friends will look as bright at me as the Bradford people did at Mr. Crabtree and the guineas." The pleasing effects which these statements produced upon the large and overflowing congregation I cannot find language to describe.

After singing, Mr. Heap ascended the pulpit and thanked the people for their kindness to his brother Lancashire minister, whom he had been the means, in the Lord's hand, of introducing amongst them, making many pleasing observations in reference to the things they had heard that night, and concluded the service with prayer.

MY RETURN TO ROCHDALE.

The time for my returning home arrived. The good hand of the Lord being with me, I got safe home on the Friday, and found my wife and family all well. During my absence, some of my dear people had been removed by death, and amongst the number one of our deacons, whom I dearly loved, whose dying words were these:

"Thou givest me the lot
Of those that fear thy name;
If endless life be their reward,
I shall possess the same."

Adding, "The Lord knows I fear him, and I leave the cause of my precious soul in his hands." The above lines have long been sweet, precious, and encouraging to my own soul.

Some of my friends appeared very anxious to know how I had succeeded; but I kept all quiet until the proper time, when there was a goodly gathering of the members, all anxious, and I addressed them as follows: "My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, whose servant I am for Jesus' sake, you have thought proper to send me to London to preach the gospel, and solicit subscriptions towards paying off the debt on our chapel. I have been from home for thirteen Lord's days, and on my return you will expect to hear how I have sped. I can assure you I have met with many discouragements. Many of the people I called upon who did not know me treated me very roughly; many others, whom I had been directed to call upon, were from home at the various bathing places, and the friends living at great distances from each other, caused me much walking. I have traversed the streets of the great city ready to faint, with blistered feet, and for fear of increasing expenses never turned aside into an eating-house to get refreshment, though sometimes I have partaken of food at the houses of friends where I have called. Yet, notwithstanding all these discouragements, through the good hand of the Lord that has been with me (at the same time opening my purse upon the table), I have brought you these two hundred and two sovereigns." When the people saw them they were ready to cry out with the church of old (Isa. xii. 6): "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." I can assure my reader that my Rochdale friends were not one whit behind dear old Mr. Crabtree's in their bright looks at me and the sovereigns, as they glistened upon the table, some of them saying they had never seen so many at one time before. Before we parted, it was agreed to hold a thanksgiving meeting the following evening, when I promised to give them some interesting account of the Lord's goodness towards me during my journey.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow"

was sung, and the people left the place with gladness of heart.

The following evening many gathered together, both of the church and congregation, to thank the Lord for his mindfulness of us, and to pray for our friends whose hearts the Lord had opened to help us. Several of the things narrated in this memoir were detailed, which interested and encouraged the minds of the friends very much. Though the meeting was long, the people were not weary, and went away rejoicing, ascribing all honour and glory to the Lord, who alone is worthy.

I have mentioned in a former part of my narrative that I preached on Wednesday evenings at Red Cross Street for Mr. Franklin. On these occasions I mostly had my tea with him, and he went with me to the chapel. Several times, as we were going along, he said, "You see, my friend, I am old, and my ministerial labours are coming to a close, and I stand in need of help. Do you know of any promising young man of God in the country that you can recommend to come up and serve us, and, should he prove acceptable, take my place when the Lord takes me home, which cannot be long at my advanced age?" At the time I could not think of any one qualified to follow such an able minister of Jesus Christ. Having formerly heard him at Manchester and Rochdale, I knew he had been an Apollos, "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures." The last time we were going together to the chapel he said, "You are going home next week, and if you should hear of any man of God in the ministry likely to suit us, let us know." As he was speaking, a person was brought to my mind whom I had not thought of previously, and I named him. After service he mentioned what had passed between us to his deacons, and they agreed to meet me at their minister's house before I left London. The following Tuesday the meeting took place, when I named to them Mr. Daniel Whitaker, what I knew of him, that he was acceptable at Manchester, Rochdale, and other places in the north; also a man of peace and good reputation, and that the people he was then labouring amongst had it not in their power to support him. They mutually came to the following conclusions: "Mr. Gadsby has long known

our minister and us. You see the state we are in. We therefore leave the matter with Mr. Gadsby and yourself. When you return to Manchester, have the matter over between yourselves. Let us know the result; and if you think it advisable, we will send for him." When I saw Mr. Gadsby I named the matter to him, and after due consideration we agreed to recommend the deacons to send for him, which they did, and it eventually led to his settlement amongst them for upwards of twenty years; but more on this subject hereafter.

When I returned from London, I got my old friend Mr. Higginson to go with me to the mortgagee to inquire if he would take the two hundred pounds and put it upon the back of the deed as received, and reduce the interest. We were told that whilst I had been in London a person had died; the consequence of which was the whole would have to be paid in. This proved a kind providence to us, for we had the other two hundred lent us on our own notes at less interest, and got our chapel deeds into our own possession. As soon as our trade began to revive a little, we felt it our duty to do what we could amongst ourselves. A subscription was entered into, and fifty pounds were collected, thus reducing our debt to one hundred and fifty. We were at peace among ourselves, the word was blessed to the souls of the people, and the church and congregation were gradually increasing; so that Zion's cords were lengthened, and her stakes strengthened.

MY FIRST VISIT TO LEICESTER.—DEATH OF MR. HARDY.

THE following spring I was again invited to supply at Zoar Chapel for six Lord's days. As our London friends had been so kind in helping us, our church could not deny their request. Having to preach on my way up to London, I left home on the Monday. When I got to Manchester, I found Mr. Gadsby so poorly as not to be able to preach. He entreated me to stay and preach for him on the Tuesday evening. I told him I was engaged to preach on Wednesday evening for Mr. Hardy's people at Leicester, and I could not get there in time if I did not leave till Wednesday morning. He told me the mail coach got to Leicester a little after seven o'clock, and he would write and let

them know that they might expect me by that time. So I consented and stayed till Wednesday, and went by the mail.

I had in those days a friend in the Manchester coach office, who had the privilege of putting a friend inside, if there was room, for outside fare. There being no inside passenger that morning, I was told to get in, and had the inside to myself nearly the whole of the journey. This was a blessed day to my soul; I enjoyed nearness of access to the Lord in prayer and meditation. I was led to trace the Lord's dealings with me, both in providence and grace. A precious portion of the word of God was brought to my mind that I thought of speaking from in the evening, my meditation upon it being sweet, soul-humbling, and God-honouring. I had never seen Mr. Hardy, though we had succeeded each other in the same pulpits, and slept in the same beds, in different places. Hearing of his abundant labours, and of the Lord making manifest the savour of his name by him in all places where he was pleased to send him, I had for a long time a desire to become personally acquainted with him, and was pleasing myself with the thought that in the evening I should enjoy this privilege; but when I reached Leicester, two men were waiting for me. As soon as I alighted, they informed me their dear pastor died the day before, and that the chapel was then filled with people, with another minister in the pulpit, who had commenced the service. My reader, if a gracious God-fearing person, will better judge of my feelings and disappointment than I can describe them. As we were proceeding to the chapel I lost my text and sermon that I had been thinking of in the coach. My mind was deeply impressed with the solemnity of the sudden removal of the dear servant of the Lord I had been anticipating seeing, and the great loss the church would sustain by it. Just as we reached the chapel, the following portion of God's word, as refreshing dew, dropped into my soul with great power (Ps. xviii. 46): "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." I entered the pulpit and took it for my text, sympathising with the people in the loss they had sustained in the death of their beloved minister, exhorting them to be thankful to the Lord for the great blessing he had been made to them,

and for continuing him so long amongst them. It was not the Lord's will that his ministering servants should abide here always, but having finished their course, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, they should depart and be with Christ, which is far better; but though they die, this is our consolation, The Lord liveth, who for our comfort hath said, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore." I had much liberty and enlargedness of heart in exalting a precious Christ as "Head over all things to his body the church," having ascended up on high and received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, who hath promised to give his churches pastors after his own heart, &c.; encouraging them to look to him, for though their beloved pastor was dead, the Lord would always be with them, according to his promise. It was a time of encouragement to the people in their bereavement, who said the Lord had sent me, and given me the text and sermon, for it had been a word in season.

I could say many things of Mr. Hardy, but as his "Life and Letters" have been published in two volumes, I forbear.

MY SECOND VISIT TO LONDON.—DEATH OF MR. FRANKLIN.—APPOINTMENT OF HIS SUCCESSOR.

I left Leicester the following morning, and reached London in the evening. When I got to my friends, the Davieses, Aldgate, they said, "We are glad you are come, as the friends belonging to Red Cross Street chapel have been here twice to-day to see if you had arrived. Your aged friend Mr. Franklin is dead. He is to be buried to-morrow, and you are particularly requested to attend the funeral." Having left Mr. Gadsby poorly, finding Mr. Hardy dead when I reached Leicester, and when I arrived in London hearing of Mr. Franklin's death, a deep impression was made on my mind, so that I could not help exclaiming in my soul-feelings, "Dear Lord, and art thou thus calling thy faithful ministers home? Do, I beseech thee, raise up, fit, and qualify more to labour in thy vineyard, as the harvest is great and faithful labourers few."

These things had another effect upon my mind, leading me to think of the time of my departure, when, like them, I should be removed from my labours here, to be, I trust, with the Lord for evermore.

The last words that Mr. Franklin uttered before his death were: "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.) Many times have I read these precious words since his death, and felt a response in my soul to the truth of them.

I have spoken previously of Mr. Whitaker going to London to assist Mr. Franklin. His ministry being acceptable, a call was given him, which he accepted. The last time Mr. Franklin administered the Lord's supper he gave the right hand of fellowship to several persons; after which he took Mr. Whitaker by the hand, saying, "My dear brother, I not only give unto thee the right hand of fellowship into this church as a member, but as my successor as its pastor;" and he delivered unto him and the church a solemn and faithful address, which caused many tears to be shed, and proved a word in season, both to the minister and people.

The day after my arrival I attended the funeral. The corpse was brought from the house to the chapel, and placed upon the table before the pulpit. The solemn service commenced with singing, reading, and prayer; when Mr. Whitaker delivered an address very suitable for the occasion. After concluding with prayer, the funeral procession proceeded to Bunhill Fields, accompanied by several ministers and the members of the church and congregation, with many from other places, who had come together to testify their respect to departed worth. It had been previously arranged between the deceased and Mr. Coombe, of Soho chapel, that he should deliver the address at the grave, which he did in a solemn, impressive manner, I trust to the edification of many: and the writer of these lines concluded with prayer. Such scenes lead us to think of the burial of Stephen, whom devout men carried to his grave, lamenting his loss.

The church being wishful that Mr. Whitaker should be settled over them before Mr. Warburton and I left London,

a day was set apart for the purpose. I copy an account of the services from a letter I sent home to my friends: "Yesterday I attended the ordination of Daniel Whitaker over the church of Christ at Red Cross Street. It was a most interesting service. The business of the day was conducted in the following manner: Hymns were given out by different ministers. Mr. Warburton, of Trowbridge, read a portion of the word of God, and engaged in prayer. Mr. Coombe described the nature of a gospel church, taking for his text I. Tim. iii. 15: 'The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.' I never heard it more scripturally done. After which he asked the church some questions, which is usually done on such occasions, which one of the deacons answered. He then asked Mr. Whitaker, 1. To give an account of the Lord's dealings with his soul; 2. His call to serve the Lord in the ministry; 3. His views of God's truth. While Daniel was answering these, my soul was humbled within me. The Lord blessed him with great liberty and boldness in declaring his views of divine truth, which took him more than an hour. Mr. Francis, one of the oldest Baptist ministers in London, offered up the ordination prayer; but there was no laying on of hands. Kershaw, of Rochdale, gave the charge to the minister from Acts vi. 4: 'But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.' Mr. Newborn concluded with thanksgiving and prayer.

"This service occupied more than four hours. We met again at seven in the evening, when Mr. Silver, an Independent minister, read and prayed. Mr. Lewis, of Trinity chapel, Borough, preached a blessed sermon to the church from Heb. xiii. 22: 'And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation;' and concluded the services of the day with prayer. The chapel was crowded with people, and great attention was paid to the word.

"As I was raised up under Mr. Warburton, and he had not heard me preach for more than twenty years, it may gratify some of you who were members of the church when he was our pastor to hear how he received the word. Whilst I was preaching I saw he was much affected, and when I came out of the pulpit into the vestry, he took me by the hand and showed great affection towards me, saying,

'The Lord bless thee. I am well satisfied with this sermon; I do not want to be more so. Go on in this honest, straightforward way, preaching these great truths; and the Lord be with thee and make them a blessing.'"

Mr. Whitaker continued with the people twenty years. The lease of the chapel being nearly expired, the parish of Cripplegate purchased the chapel, paying much more for it than the people could afford to give, and they removed to Shaftesbury Hall. Mr. Whitaker continued with them for a time, but eventually removed to Tunbridge Wells, where he is labouring with much acceptance.

ZOAR, GREAT ALIE STREET.

The Lord's day after Mr. Franklin's burial, I commenced my labours again at Zoar chapel for six Lord's days, and had my Master's presence with me, his word being made a blessing to the souls of the people. Several came forward to join the church, to whom the gospel had been made the power of God unto salvation on my former visit. Another effort was made by the people for me to become their pastor, and I was pressed on all sides to give them encouragement; but this I could not do to their satisfaction, as I knew my settlement over the people at Rochdale was of God, in answer to their prayers and the many petitions I had put up to the Lord, and the answers I had received; the blessing also that had attended my poor imperfect labours amongst them testifying I was in the right place; so that I never could kneel down before the Lord and ask him to let me leave the people over which he had placed me.

While these things were in agitation, an old Baptist minister, who was a Lancashire man and knew me before I entered the ministry, and always showed kindness towards me, being in London at this time, sent for me to the house where he was staying, and said, "I hear of the blessing that attends your ministry, the number of your hearers, and the great desire there is for you to settle amongst them. Are you for leaving Rochdale and coming to London?" I told him I could not see the moving of the pillar of the cloud for me to leave Rochdale to come to London or go to any other place, that we were peaceable, that I loved the people, and knew that I was highly esteemed in love by them for

my work's sake, and provided for by them with what was needful, and I could not leave them for filthy lucre's sake. He replied, "It is well you take this view of the subject. Many ministers, if they had the opening you have in London, would go home and cause an unpleasantness amongst their people as an excuse to get away." I replied, "I tremble at the thought of doing such a thing as an excuse for leaving a God-fearing, peaceable people. How could I bow before the Lord, and ask his blessing and presence to go with me? The fear of the Lord, a tender conscience, the honour and the glory of God, and a desire for the peace and prosperity of Zion, forbid such a mercenary, wicked practice." This minister, being old and infirm, and having to go into the city to the offices of the Missionary and Peace Societies, requested me to go with him, that he could take hold of my arm in the crowded streets. In the office of the Missionary Society he had some business to transact with the secretary, and left me with an elderly gentleman who was writing. I saw that several times he looked at me. At length he said, "Sir, excuse my freedom. If I am not mistaken, I heard you preach last night in Great Alie Street chapel." I told him I was there; when he further added, "I am a member of Little Prescot Street, Abraham Booth's old place." I inquired how they were getting on, and was informed but poorly. He also said, "I trust we have a good, gracious man for our minister. He is very learned and talented." I inquired the reason of their poor state, seeing they had such a minister. His reply was, "We have the gospel preached with excellence of speech and man's wisdom. You mark my word, Sir. The Holy Ghost does not honour in the souls of his people a style of language that is either above or below his own pure word, which is sound speech, which cannot be condemned." He further added, "As I sat and heard you last night preach the gospel, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and saw the blessed effect it had upon the attentive congregation, I said within myself, 'O that our minister was here, hearing this plain countryman preach the gospel in this plain Bible language, and seeing the attention paid to the same!'" I was pleased with what the man said, inasmuch as I hoped he had a relish for the truth; but

grieved that such is in too many instances the style of preaching of the present time.

A CALL FROM THE CHURCH AT ZOAR, LONDON.

A LONDON gentleman, who frequently visited Manchester in the course of his business, and when there attended Mr. Gadsby's ministry, one Tuesday evening went into the vestry to speak to the minister, and said to him, "Your friend Mr. Kershaw is gone to London again. Do you think he is likely to settle there?" Mr. Gadsby replied, "I hope not." The gentleman said, "I can assure you that every effort is being used that can be to prevail upon him to leave Rochdale and settle in London." After a pause of some moments, Mr. Gadsby said, "I cannot tell whether my friend John Kershaw will go to settle in London or not; but I can say this,—If William Gadsby leave Manchester, or John Warburton leave Trowbridge, or John Kershaw leave Rochdale, let any of them leave where they are, and they will go from home. They are where the Lord has placed them, and honoured and blessed their labours to the souls of his people, and they will do wrong if they move from thence." This was communicated to me by my friend Mr. Higginson, one of the deacons, who heard the conversation; and in the circumstances I was then placed it was a word in season.

Soon after the ordination of Mr. Whitaker, at which I had a time of refreshing, as related in a former page, I sank in my soul-feeling into great darkness, hardness of heart, bondage of spirit, and was held fast as in a prison, both in reading, meditation, and prayer. The Saturday passed over in sighs and groans. No text could I fix upon to speak from, rebellious feelings rising in my mind at the thoughts of the Sabbath being so near, and nothing for the people. Sunday morning came, and I could get nothing; but one portion of the word of God had got fast hold of me, which was Ps. lxxxviii. 8: "I am shut up, and cannot come forth." With this I ventured into the pulpit, and read it as my text, telling the people I had nothing else, for the Lord had shut me up. The Lord shuts up his ministers that they may ministerially visit his dear people that are shut up in the prison-house. The Lord helped me much in describing the bondage state the

Lord's family sink into, their inability to deliver themselves, and that it is the Lord alone can loose the prisoner, as I proved it on that occasion; for he set my soul at liberty, opened my mouth, and carried the word with power to the souls of the people, bringing minister and people out of the prison-house into the banqueting-house, his banner over them being love, and experimentally teaching us the truth of his word: "So he shall open, and none shall shut; he shall shut, and none shall open." (Isa. xxii. 22.) I do not remember ever preaching a sermon that was made a greater blessing to the prisoners of hope and mourners in Zion. I had several letters sent, stating the benefit received, and with one of them a sermon preached by Mr. Huntington forty years before.

Before I left London the following question was put to me by the friends at Zoar: "If we can make it appear to your church that there is a greater field of usefulness in London than at Rochdale, and thus prevail upon them to give you up, will you come and serve us?" I told them I would. Shortly after my return home, I received the following from one of the deacons:

"London, July 19th, 1833.

"Dear Brother Kershaw,—A special church meeting at Zoar Chapel was held on Wednesday evening last, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of sending the following letter, and after discussing its contents very minutely, it was agreed to by the church with the exception of four only. I am desired to forward the same to you, and shall feel obliged by your submitting the same to your church at your earliest convenience; and, after they have made up their minds, to forward me an answer by post, in order that I may call the church together.

"Wishing you every new covenant blessing, and much of the presence of our dear Lord,

"I remain,

"My dear Brother,

"Yours in the best Bonds,

"E. J."

"The Church of Jesus Christ, meeting for Divine Worship at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, London,

" To the Church of Christ, under the pastoral care of Mr. John Kershaw, Hope Chapel, Rochdale, Lancashire,
" Sendeth Christian salutation.

" Dearly beloved Brethren and Sisters,—The ways of our covenant God and Father are truly mysterious, not only in the dispensations of his grace, but also in his providence; and it is a source of consolation to every sincere mind that all things are under the immediate control of the great Head of the church, and that nothing can transpire but what shall in the development of his purposes shadow forth the glory of him in the salvation and security of his church and people. It is also equally clear that the very boundaries of the habitations of his dear family, while tabernacling in this vale of tears, are fixed by his immutable decree; and however united and connected together we may be, yet if he designs a separation of the dearest ties, he will make it plain and evident in his all-wise dispensations. The above church at Zoar, as you doubtless know, have long been without an under-shepherd to take the oversight and care of them in the Lord, and they have not only importuned but been urgent and wrestled hard at a throne of grace that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls would in his own due time and way send them a pastor agreeable to his promise, after his own heart, who should feed them with knowledge and understanding; and they also trust they have been led to watch unto prayer, earnestly desirous not to take one step without the guidance of the cloudy pillar by day, and fiery pillar by night. And it does appear most remarkable to them that since October last their minds have in a greater or lesser degree been particularly fixed upon your revered and respected pastor, Mr. John Kershaw. From nearly the first time of hearing him, in August, 1832, a powerful impression was made on their minds that the Lord Jesus had designed to remove him to London, in order to make him more extensively useful in feeding the church of God which he hath purchased with his own most precious blood; nor can they be persuaded but that he will, in answer to prayer, make it manifest that he lives not only in the affections of the people at Zoar, but many others also of the great metropolis; and as a convincing proof thereof, wherever he has stood up to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus the Lord, the numbers that

have attended, the meltings of heart that have been felt, the blessings that have followed his ministry, have been abundantly owned by the Lord the Spirit. They know that he has been instrumental of awakening many to the knowledge of themselves as poor lost, guilty sinners, of imparting spiritual comfort and consolation to the wounded soul, and also of feeding and building up others in their most holy faith. During his last visit to London many can testify to the above facts, and set to their seal the happiness and joy they felt under the word he was helped to preach, and at the ordinance of believers' baptism he had the unspeakable pleasure of knowing that God had given him seals to his ministry and souls for his hire. All these circumstances combining together with the affection and zeal manifested by him on every occasion emboldens the church to believe that in his removal to London a great and effectual door will be opened for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ and for the outpouring of the Spirit more abundantly.

"And, dear brethren and sisters, you know that the anxious desire and prayer of you all is the glorious spread of divine truth in the present day. Especially in London we may indeed take up the lamentation and say, 'How is the fine gold become dim, and how awfully has truth fallen in the streets! How few indeed are to be found that contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' We are perfectly aware, dear brethren and sisters, that our brother Kershaw is in your affections to live and die with you. We also believe that a sweet union subsists between you; yet if his dear Lord and Master, whose he is and whom he serves, has designed him to leave his dearest friends for his glory and honour, and to make him a blessed mouth and witness for him in London, we feel quite assured that our covenant God and Father will make up the breach by another of his witnesses being sent or raised up among you; and though there are and will be a sorrowing after him, as was the case with the Ephesian elders at the parting season with their beloved brother Paul, yet we hope and trust you will see the importance and needs-be to comply with the earnest entreaties of the church at Zoar, that you may be enabled to give him up to the Lord, that he may be a light to God's dear people in London, but especially at Zoar.

"Whilst we cordially feel for you as a church, we pray that the Lord would lay this epistle on your hearts, after asking counsel from him, if his will should be to give up our dear brother Kershaw to us, provided he should feel himself disposed to join in our request. And should it indeed appear to be the will of God that a mutual separation take place between you, it shall be our earnest entreaty at a throne of grace that you may be supplied with another brother from amongst you, or elsewhere, that may be a blessing to you, and you as a church a blessing to him.

"Earnestly requesting an answer from you as a church as soon as your minds are made up, commending you and our dear brother Kershaw into the hands of a faithful and covenant-keeping God, whose ways are in the great deep, we beg to subscribe ourselves,

"Yours in Affection and Love,

"Signed on the behalf of the Church at Zoar,

"Joshua Pedley,

"William Hebden,

"Edward Justins, Deacons.

"July 19th, 1833."

I cannot forget the effect the reading of this letter produced. There was for some time perfect silence. At length our old deacon said, "This is a well-written letter to accomplish the end they have in view; but, notwithstanding all the arguments raised, we cannot for a moment entertain the thought of giving up our minister to the church in London." And it was soon manifest that this was the feeling of all present, many rising from their seats, saying, "We neither can nor will give up our minister." On this occasion I found it in vain to enjoin the apostle's exhortation: "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (I. Cor. xiv. 34); for many of the dear old women could not keep silence, and some of the men got warm, and used strong language.

When the feelings and passions of the people were a little abated, it was put and carried unanimously, "That the letter just read from the church at Zoar chapel, London, be answered in the negative." The question then arose who should draw up the answer, when two different feelings were manifested; some were for a letter being sent calcu-

lated to cut off any further communication; others, more sober-minded, were for a kind, affectionate and faithful answer to be sent, tending to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One of each of these parties was appointed to draw up the reply; but they could by no means agree.

The following Sabbath was our school anniversary, and Mr. Rushton, of Liverpool (author of a work on "Redemption"), was invited to preach in the evening. He came over on Saturday, and was made acquainted with the difficulty we were in, and volunteered to draw up the letter. This was mentioned to the church, after service in the morning, and mutually agreed to, and also for the church to meet after the service in the afternoon, when he would be prepared to read it to them. The letter was as follows:

"The Church of Jesus Christ, meeting for Divine Worship in Hope Chapel, Rochdale, under the pastoral care of Mr. John Kershaw,

"To the Church of Jesus Christ, assembling for Divine Worship at Zoar Chapel, London,

"Sendeth Christian salutation.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters,—Your letter, dated July 19th, requesting us to give up to you our esteemed pastor, was read at our church meeting, and it occasioned, we assure you, unspeakable surprise and regret. Whilst we are not unmindful of the Christian kindness which our London brethren have manifested to us, both as a church and to our beloved pastor personally, we regret exceedingly that any church of Christ should so far lose sight of the precepts of God our Saviour as to act in the manner you have done. You must be aware that the great Head of the church hath graciously given us our esteemed pastor in answer to prayer and in faithfulness to his promises by Jeremiah (iii. 15). How, then, could you think for a moment to oppose the gracious dispensations of his providence, by attempting his removal from us? You acknowledge in your letter that a sweet union subsists between us and him. With what propriety, then, can you endeavour to dissolve that union, and take from us a pastor God hath graciously given to us? Truly, brethren, we cannot view

your conduct otherwise than as unkind towards us and distrustful towards God. If you are waiting upon God, as you say you are, to give you a pastor after his own heart, do allow us, in love to you, to entreat you to expect one from him in a manner consistent with his own word, and not in such a way as is opposed not only to the law of love but the expressed precepts of the New Testament.

"We have only to add that we all, with one consent, in union with our beloved pastor, send you a decided negative to your request; and whilst we desire to express our love to you as fellow members of the body of Christ, we are nevertheless constrained to say that our love to you would be greatly confirmed and increased if our letter to you be the means of convincing you that you have erred in this matter, producing a corresponding acknowledgment from you.

"We remain, dear Brethren,
"Yours in the Lord,
"Signed on the behalf of the Church,
"John Kershaw, Minister.
"Jacob Wolfendon,
"John Butterworth,
"Henry Parkinson,
"Thomas Fielding,
"Robert Whitaker,
"Deacons."

It was agreed that the letter drawn up and read by our friend Mr. Rushton should be sent as the answer to the church in London.

At the close of this meeting a horse was waiting to take me to a place six miles from Rochdale, to preach an anniversary sermon. In the way I had to go I had a full view of the fields and woods that had been the scene of my youthful follies; also where I retired for prayer and supplication when under convictions of sin, and where I had spent so much time in prayer and supplication in reference to my call to the work of the ministry; and I called to remembrance the many answers I had received from the Lord to the prayers I had offered up in those solitary places, little thinking, in those days of poverty and distress, that the time would come when there would arise such a

contention amongst the churches of the saints about my labours. My soul was greatly humbled before the Lord, and I thanked him for making manifest the savour of his knowledge by me in all places.

As I rode along, thinking of what had taken place, I felt sorry that my members and deacons had compelled me to sign the letter. As I was the person the two churches were contending about, I considered I ought to have been permitted to be passive in the matter. I knew my friends in London would be grieved about it, which they were, and wrote to me upon the subject; but when I explained the matter to them, and how I was situated, they were pacified towards me, and the breach so far made up between the two churches that my people have consented to my visiting them annually ever since, which is now more than thirty years.

My readers will recollect that much has been recorded by me respecting my dear and much-valued friend Thomas Niven, who, in consequence of age and infirmities, returned to his relatives in Scotland. He was living at the time the effort was made to remove me to London, and after the affair was settled I received from him the following letter:

"Dumfries, May 22nd, 1834.

"My beloved Brother in the Lord,—Your much-esteemed letter came duly to hand, and was a sweet cordial to my soul. Truly I felt the truth of that word: 'As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' I am growing very feeble and forgetful, and have much failed in my health, having had a severe attack of influenza this season; but never, while memory holds her reign, can I forget the sweet moments we have enjoyed together in conversing about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and with what delight I have listened to the balmy gospel dropping richly from your lips, as a highly-favoured instrument in the Lord's hand.

"My dear brother in Christ, though far removed from you in body, my soul is knit to you and the dear brethren with whom I so frequently went to the house of God in company. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to hear of your welfare as a church, and your being increased with the increase of God. It was with feelings of the highest

gratitude and joy that I heard of your deliberate and firm refusal of a more advantageous offer as to temporal things, and your resolve and determination to abide with your own people. I do think you have acted right in remaining with the church where you have long laboured, and where your public ministrations have been both savoury and successful; and my earnest prayer is that your bow may abide in strength, and that you may still be the honoured instrument of comforting the saints, and in turning many from darkness to light, that may be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.

"In a land of comparative drought, I have not been left altogether alone. I have formed an intimate acquaintance with some Christian friends in this place, whose conversation has much refreshed me. The Baptist friends who were favoured with your former visit would be happy, if the will of the Lord was so, once more to see your face in the flesh, and hear you preach the word of life. My soul rests with confidence on the everlasting love of God, and his well-ordered covenant of grace. It is all my salvation and desire; and I am looking for that happy country where 'Farewell!' shall be a sound unknown, and parting be no more. I entreat an interest in your prayers.

"Remember me to your family, and all the brethren and sisters. I shall be pleased to hear from you whilst I am in the body.

"Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,
"Thomas Niven."

My visits to Trowbridge.—Mr. Warburton.

It may interest my readers to know that a correspondence was kept up between me and our old pastor, Mr. Warburton. I had many encouraging letters from him, and on three occasions went to supply for a month at a time at Trowbridge. On my first visit I was well pleased to see such a large chapel well filled with an attentive congregation. The first Lord's day I spoke from Deut. xxxiii. 3: "Yea, he loved the people," &c. The second Lord's day evening, when I went to the chapel, all was full, so that it was with difficulty I could reach the pulpit. The Lord blessed me with a door of utterance in preaching the word

of life, and in speaking of those things which I had heard, and seen, and handled of the word of life. The doctrine dropped as the rain and distilled as dew in the souls of the people, who flocked round me saying, "These blessed truths are not new doctrines to us, as our dear pastor is constantly preaching them amongst us; and it is a great confirmation of the truth of them in our souls to hear you preach them as you do, and prove them from the word of God, and the Spirit's testifying the truth of them in your own soul. We rejoiced together in Christ Jesus, and thanked God and took courage. They received under the ministry spiritual things, and I reaped of their carnal things; for they sent me home with a new suit of clothes and many other useful things; for which I felt thankful.

My second visit was some years afterwards, and was attended with similar success; and it rejoiced my heart to see the labours of my late pastor and esteemed friend so abundantly honoured of God, minister, deacons, church and congregation walking together in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In all my labours amongst the churches, I have not seen a greater spirit of hearing the truth than I saw at Trowbridge and several other places in the West of England that I have visited. The Lord has many God-fearing, praying people in those parts.

Twenty years rolled round before I visited Trowbridge the third time, and it pains me in my soul to say that I found them in as great confusion as on my former visits I had found them in great peace. It is not my province, in recording my own affairs, to enter into the causes of these contentions, neither would it be profitable to the reader. Suffice it to say it was not doctrine nor experience, but church discipline and circumstantial things, which greatly embittered their aged pastor's latter days, as will appear from a letter I received from him before I left home:

"August 12th, 1852.

"My dear Friend,—I just drop you a line to say we shall expect you the first four Lord's days in October. I expect you will have a few to baptize. I feel the infirmities of old age increasing upon me. My soul has proved the Lord to be my helper. The last thirteen or fourteen months I verily thought, at times, the troubles we have

had in the church would have been my end in this world; but my dear Lord and Saviour has supported me. The Lord be with us, to guide, direct, comfort and strengthen us with his grace daily, that whatever his will concerning us here below may be, we may have grace given us to please him in all things.

"My love to your wife and all friends; and may the presence and blessing of God rest upon you abundantly. This is the prayer of

"Your unworthy Brother in the Lord,

"JOHN WARBURTON."

Before I left home I saw these dissensions at Trowbridge much lamented in a monthly periodical, in which my going to supply them was announced, and a hope expressed that I might be instrumental in the Lord's hands of good to them in restoring peace, which raised the expectations of the people to hope a reconciliation might be effected, and some of the neighbouring ministers, who were grieved that such contentions should exist in a place that had been so highly honoured of God, were cherishing the same hope. I left home and entered Trowbridge with Paul's determination to "know nothing amongst them save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The first two Sabbaths the venerable pastor was from home, and, as I was staying at his house, I kept myself as much in my study as I could, not visiting among the people, for fear of being entangled with their contentions. The first Sabbath I preached from Ps. cxlv. 19: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him," &c. All parties said it was a word in season, and I was surrounded by the people making their complaints, pleading for something to be done to restore peace amongst them. I deemed it prudent to be still until their minister came home. When we met and had conversation upon the subject, I soon found the truth of Solomon's words (Prov. xviii. 19): "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle."

The following Lord's day morning, after preaching, I baptized nine persons; and in the afternoon the aged pastor gave them the right hand of fellowship and administered the Lord's supper, in which I assisted him. I was much

blessed in my soul in hearing the solemn address which he delivered at the table of the Lord. The truth dropped with power and sweet savour into my soul; so that it was to me a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

The Tuesday before I left, a social tea meeting was held in the chapel, at which I delivered an address, which was taken down and sent to London to be printed. Of this I had no knowledge until I received the proof sheet from the printer. It was published as a tract, and had an extensive circulation. I have had many tokens of its usefulness, for which I would thank the Lord.

The following evening I took my leave in an affectionate address to an attentive congregation. After service many came into the vestry to express the benefit they had received under the word, and to testify the reality of it by their gifts.

I left Trowbridge with very different feelings than I did on the two former occasions, sorry to see brethren that were hoping to spend a happy eternity together falling out by the way, embittering each other's cup of woe, being as pricking thorns in each other's eyes and sides. David drank of this bitter cup, as is evident from Ps. lv. It caused fearfulness, trembling and horror to overwhelm him, and he longed for the wings of a dove that he might flee away and be at rest. How different were his feelings when he said, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;" and how seasonable the exhortation: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

After all the dear old man's troubles, it graciously pleased the Lord to appear for him in his last sickness, to comfort and strengthen his soul, enabling him to leave a blessed testimony of the faithfulness of his covenant God and Father in Christ Jesus. Mr. Gadsby and Mr. Warburton were the two ministers that I have been the most connected with. We have often been spoken of as three links in a chain,—Mr. Gadsby the first link; Mr. Warburton the second, being the first fruits of Mr. Gadsby's labours at Manchester, and sent out by that church to preach the gospel; myself the third link, being a member of the church at Rochdale under the care of Mr. Warburton, and sent

out and encouraged by them to preach the gospel.* Two of these links are removed from the church militant to the church triumphant, and at my advanced age it cannot be long before I must follow them, and unite with them in ascribing "Salvation to God and the Lamb for ever and ever."

DEATH OF MR. GADSBY.

For many years, when praying for my brethren in the ministry, the above-named were always uppermost in my mind. Mr. Warburton being removed two hundred miles from Rochdale, I had not so much to do with him as Mr. Gadsby, who was only eleven miles from us.

It is with pleasure that I record that I have never known two churches and ministers who were in greater harmony than the ministers and churches of Manchester and Rochdale. It was the rule never to deny each other the services of their pastor when wanted. Mr. Gadsby was truly a father to me and our people. We had no difficulties of importance but he was made acquainted with them, always sympathising with us and giving us good counsel. I found it a great blessing to have such a faithful brother and companion in the path of tribulation. For some time before his death I saw the outward man was decaying, and the time of his departure drawing near, and was greatly troubled at the thought of the time coming when I should see his face no more, nor hear his voice proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, nor enjoy his savoury conversation. One morning, as I was engaged in writing, Mr. Higginson, one of Mr. Gadsby's deacons, came, and informed me "the hand of death had laid hold of their beloved pastor, and I must go and see him." He also wanted to see our deacons, to make arrangements for me to supply at Manchester the following Lord's day.

I went over to Manchester to see the dear man. As

* Mr. Kershaw often spoke of these three links. A friend in London originated the idea some years ago; and this led to Mr. J. Gadsby's suggesting that the three good men should be photographed on one card, though he ultimately extended the idea, and had nine others,—Wickliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Huntington, M'Kenzie, Philpot, Godwin, and Taylor,—photographed with them.—L. K.

soon as I entered the room, he looked affectionately at me, and said, "My preaching is over." I asked him how he felt in his mind. He replied, "Christ appears glorious," and attempted to speak of his preciousness and beauty; but his strength was soon exhausted, and I begged of him not to speak, and I would speak for him of our glorious Christ and his finished salvation; and to my remarks he added his hearty "Amen." I read to him Isa. xii. and Ps. xxiii., making sundry observations which were evidently sweet and savoury to his soul. He told me the following verse of one of Mr. Hart's hymns had been much upon his mind:

"'Tis to credit contradictions,
Talk with him one never sees,
Cry and groan beneath afflictions,
Yet to dread the thoughts of ease.

"'Tis to feel the fight against us,
Yet the victory hope to gain;
To believe that Christ has cleansed us,
Though the leprosy remain."

We prayed together for the last time, and took an affectionate leave of each other, though I hoped I might see him again on Saturday, when I went over to be ready for the labours of the Sabbath; but, being delayed at home, having to inter a corpse in our chapel-yard, he expired before I reached his house. The senior deacon was waiting for me at the station, and he told me if we got there quickly we might see him alive; but his immortal spirit had fled, though his flesh was still warm. This was to me a very solemn time. I had the bereaved family around me, and at their request wrote to the relatives and immediate friends of the deceased, and to some of his brethren in the ministry, to inform them of the solemn event. The letters were posted that evening, and delivered next morning (Sunday), so that his death was announced from several pulpits, which caused great lamentation in the assemblies of the saints.

The morning after Mr. Gadsby's death was a very trying season, both to me and the bereaved people. They came, expecting to hear their honoured pastor as usual, but were told from the pulpit he was dead. My spiritual reader can better imagine than I can describe the sensation this announcement produced amongst them. I read the former

part of I. Peter v., feeling much concerned to speak a word in season to soothe their sorrow, directing their attention to the Lord's great goodness to them in favouring them with so valuable and able a minister for so many years, whose labours had been so abundantly blessed in the conversion of sinners to God and the edification and building up of the saints, as they could well testify. He had finished his course with joy and the work which the Lord had appointed for him, and it had pleased the Lord to remove him from the midst of them to join the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names were written in heaven, uniting with them in "crowning the Redeemer's brow with immortal honours," as he was wont to exclaim in his ministry. Their loss was his eternal gain, he having obtained joy and gladness, and his sorrows and sighing having for ever fled away. In the midst of such bereavements this is our consolation: "The Lord liveth, who hath said, 'I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore.' All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, and he has promised to give his churches pastors after his own heart," &c., and I exhorted them to plead his promise and watch for the fulfilment thereof, in giving them another pastor, asking wisdom of the Lord to guide and direct them in all their affairs, and reminding them that many amongst them were far advanced in years, so that their stay here below could not be very long, but that they, like their beloved pastor, must be removed out of time into eternity, and how desirable it was for them to live the residue of their days devoted to the service of the Lord, being much concerned for the peace and prosperity of Zion, and to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, in Christ Jesus, and praying that the Lord would raise up from the ruins of the fall a seed to serve him and a generation to call him blessed when they were numbered with the dead. Great attention was paid to the word.

Mr. Warburton was written to, to come and bury him and preach his funeral sermon, but declined doing so, because of the distance, bodily infirmities, and the winterly state of the weather; so it fell to my lot to perform these solemn services.

On the morning of the funeral the friends flocked

together from far and near, formed a procession, and walked before the hearse, many hundreds of them four abreast. The hearse was followed by eleven mourning coaches and many other vehicles, and thousands of people lined the streets through which the mournful *cortége* had to pass, vast numbers of whom were evidently affected. One of the friends who had been brought up under Mr. Gadsby's ministry left his carriage and walked by the wayside to hear what the people said, and the general tone was, "He was a good, great, honest, upright man, a friend to the poor, and would be greatly missed in the town, as well as in his own chapel, amongst his own people."

As we got nearer to the cemetery the number of people greatly increased. It was recorded in the Manchester papers that three thousand persons surrounded the grave; and had it not been a snowy morning there is no doubt but many more would have been present. I had stood by the grave of many who had been members of churches, deacons, and ministers, and seen their bodies lowered into their last resting-place until the trumpet shall be sounded and the dead shall be raised, but never experienced the feelings I did on this occasion. Several of my ministerial brethren and deacons of the different churches stood by me while I addressed the assembled multitude as follows:

"As it hath pleased Almighty God to call the soul of this his ministering servant and our dearly-beloved brother from the body, we commit the body to the ground, dust to dust and ashes to ashes, in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection from the dead at that eventful period when Christ the great Judge of all shall descend upon the clouds of heaven, when the trumpet shall be sounded and the dead shall be raised, and the body we now sow a corruptible body, because of sin, must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, and be fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the saying that is written be fully accomplished, both in reference to Christ and all his spiritual seed, the purchase of Christ's precious blood: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

"What I have further to say concerning our dear departed brother is not to give praise and honour to him as one of the fallen sons of an apostate Adam. This would be decidedly hostile to what were the feelings of him who,

whilst dwelling amongst us, so often exclaimed, 'Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory, for thy mercy and truth's sake.' What I would say is to exalt the riches of God's grace, that shone so brightly in him as a Christian and minister of the everlasting gospel, and as a citizen of this great and populous town. By nature he was no better than the rest of his father's house. He was 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him.' Like the rest of the people of God in their Adam-fallen state, he erred and strayed from him like a lost sheep, joining the multitude of the ungodly in the broad and downward road that leads to destruction. Dead in trespasses and sins, at enmity against God in his heart, he lifted up his puny hands and arms in rebellion against the God in whose hands his breath was. He had his conversation amongst his ungodly companions in sin, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and was by nature one of the children of wrath, even as others. But in apostolic language he exultingly exclaimed that God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he had loved him, even when dead in sins, had quickened him, and by grace saved him, plucking him as a brand from the fire. Thus he was called by God's irresistible grace from amongst his ungodly companions in sin, out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God and his Christ, out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The Holy Spirit, whose prerogative it is to quicken the dead sinner, and to convince his people of their sins and sinfulness, carried God's just and holy law, by which is the knowledge of sin, with an almighty power into his soul. He died to all hope of being saved by works of righteousness done by himself. What divines have justly denominated a law-work in the conscience was very deep and powerful in him. He felt the thunderings of Mount Sinai in his soul, which made him tremble, fear and quake. He proved, by heartfelt experience, that Mount Sinai is no hiding-place to the poor guilty sinner, and that all that the law could do for him was to curse and condemn him as a vile transgressor; as it is written: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' His soul lay in chains, shut up as in a prison. He felt himself sinking in the miry clay and horrible pit of guilt and condem-

nation. He sighed, groaned, and cried mightily to the Lord for help and deliverance, and the Lord was graciously pleased to hear his cry and lift him up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and to set his feet upon the Rock of Salvation, and establish his goings, &c. The ever-blessed Spirit shed abroad the sweet love of Jesus in his soul, applied the precious blood of Christ, sealed peace and pardon in his conscience, and led him into the sweet enjoyment of the glorious liberty of the gospel, wherewith Christ makes his people free. Henceforth he was determined to know nothing as the ground and foundation of his hope but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Thus it pleased God, who separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by his grace, to reveal his son in him, that he might preach him amongst the heathen; for I fear not to say that, like Paul, he was a chosen vessel of mercy, to bear the precious name of Jesus before Gentile sinners.

"As a minister of the everlasting gospel, our departed brother received not his credentials from the heads of universities or academies, but from the great Head of the church, who has ascended up on high, and received ministerial gifts for men. (See Eph. iv. 10-13.) The Lord of the harvest, whose prerogative it is to send forth labourers into his vineyard, laid the work of the ministry so powerfully upon his mind that he could not rest day or night. The great and important work of an ambassador of King Jesus on the one hand, and his unfitness and inability for so important a work on the other, had such an effect upon his mind that, as I have heard him say, he 'chose rather to die than enter upon the work.' But the Lord had ordained him for the work, and he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, wrought mightily in him. Though, like Jeremiah, he said in his heart, 'I will not make mention of the name of the Lord,' the word of the Lord was in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones, so that he was weary with forbearing, and could not stay. Power from on high came upon him. His friends with whom he was connected had it impressed upon their minds that the Lord designed him for the ministry, and they gave him encouragement to speak in the name of the Lord amongst them. He did so, though with fear and trembling, the Lord working with

him, confirming the word spoken by him in the souls of his people. Visible signs followed, sinners were converted to God, and saints edified. Thus began the ministerial labours of our departed brother. In the midland counties of Warwickshire and Leicestershire doors were opened for him to preach the word of life. A chapel was built for him at Hinckley, where his labours were blest, as several still living can testify. But Hinckley, that small, obscure town, when compared with the large population of Manchester, was not to be the place of his future destiny; but Manchester and the populous counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire were to be the sphere of his more extensive usefulness in the ministry.

"But, my dear friends, in the present unfavourable state of the weather, as you have to stand exposed to its severity, being in danger of taking cold, I will not detain you recapitulating the circumstances which led to his coming to Manchester. Suffice it to say, he watched the moving of the pillar of the cloud from Hinckley to Manchester, and he followed it. The Baptist cause at St. George's Road in this town, when he came to Manchester, was in a very low state. The first Lord's day morning when he entered the pulpit he had not more people than there were pews in the place. He preached the great and glorious truths of the gospel with the ability God gave him, and the power of the Lord rested upon him and blessed the good word of his grace spoken by him to the souls of the people, so that they felt their hearts knit unto him for the truth's sake. During the intermission between the morning and afternoon services, several of the friends (like the Samaritan woman that the Lord met with at Jacob's well) went amongst their friends and acquaintance, saying, 'Come and hear a man the Lord has sent to St. George's Road chapel.' By this means the place was tolerably well filled in the afternoon, and in the evening it was crowded with attentive hearers. He remained with them four Lord's days, the word spoken by him having free course, and being glorified; so that the good old veterans connected with the place, whose souls are now in glory, said, 'This is the man for us. Arise and anoint him.' They began to cry mightily to God to make a way for him to come amongst them, and never rested till he was placed over them as

their pastor, which was in 1805. And the Lord has been graciously pleased to enable him to stand on Zion's walls firm to the truth in this town and neighbourhood, and in many parts of this island, for more than 38 years.

"The great and glorious truths of the gospel that our dear brother so faithfully and ably defended in the face of great opposition are, the doctrine of the fall,—Adam's great transgression. 'By the disobedience of one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, for that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.' So that we are 'altogether as an unclean thing,' sin, that accursed thing which a holy God hates, being in our nature, in our hearts, in our thoughts, and in all our ways.

"I never heard a man who was so well qualified by the Lord to lay proud man so low in the dust and upon the dunghill of self-abasement as our departed brother. He deeply felt the depravity of his own nature and the plague of his own heart, and was well able to describe them, lifting up his voice like a trumpet to show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins, pointing out their lost, ruined, weak, helpless, undone state and condition as vile transgressors, and proving the impossibility of justification by their own righteousness. He also ably contended for a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, unitedly engaged in the well-ordered covenant for the salvation and glorification of the church; the everlasting electing love of Jehovah the Father; the glorious Person of our Immanuel, the Incarnate God, who came into the world to save the chief of sinners; the perfect obedience of Christ to the law, as the law-fulfilling righteousness of his people, imputed to them, as the matter of their justification and acceptance before God; the great atonement made by the shedding of the precious blood of Christ for the sins of his church and people; the removing of the curse of the divine law, Christ having been made a curse for us; the necessity of the law being applied to the sinner's conscience by the invincible power of the Spirit. He was ambitious to exalt Christ upon the pole of the gospel, as the plague of death, the destruction of the grave; also the power of Christ's resurrection, the glory of his ascension, and his ever-prevalent intercession.

Christ in his offices, characters, and relationship to his people he blessedly set forth. Finished salvation, all of grace, from first to last, was the joy of his heart and the boast of his song, as he often exclaimed, 'Honours crown his brow for ever;' as expressed in that precious hymn composed by him:

> "'Immortal honours rest on Jesus' head;
> My God, my portion, and my living bread;
> In him I live, upon him cast my care;
> He saves from death, destruction, and despair.'

The glorious Person and Godhead of the Holy Ghost he constantly and firmly maintained, insisting upon the power of God the Holy Ghost to quicken the dead sinner, and to convince him of his sins and sinfulness, and to bring him with a broken heart to Jesus's feet, and to begin, carry on, and complete the good work of grace in the souls of his people, and in the personal application of the precious truths of God with power to the soul. Thus he constantly vindicated the Personal work of the Spirit in the souls of his people, and proved from the Scriptures that without this the profession of religion is but a dead form.

Nor was our brother deficient in preaching up practical godliness, for as the body without the soul is dead, so faith, if it does not produce good works, is dead also. He constantly enjoined the precepts and exhortations of the gospel upon the household of faith, upon evangelical principles. I hope never to forget a sermon that he preached for us at Rochdale thirty years ago from Ps. l. 23: 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.' In speaking of what it was to have our conversation ordered aright, I never heard practical godliness so set forth by any man, neither before nor since; so while he maintained the great and glorious doctrines of the gospel, and insisted upon an experimental acquaintance with them by the unctuous teaching of God the Holy Ghost, he constantly insisted upon the practical effects these truths produced.

"His work is done. He has finished his course with joy, and the ministry which he received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. He fought the good fight of faith, and has now received the crown of righteous-

ness, given by Christ unto all them that love his appearing, which crown he is joyfully casting at his Redeemer's feet, who loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood, and made him a king and a priest unto God and his Father. To whom be all the glory and dominion for ever and ever.

"To the bereaved church and congregation meeting for divine worship in the Baptist chapel, St. George's Road, I would say, 'You have lost a faithful, affectionate pastor, one who cared for your peace and prosperity, and was willing to endure all things for your sakes, that you might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. You know, my dear friends, that he has very gladly spent, and been spent with you and for you. Your loss is great, such as none can replace but the great Head of the church. The Lord give you a spirit of prayer that he may give you another pastor whom he will honour, as he has done your late pastor; so that

> "'As one Elijah dies,
> True prophet of the Lord,
> May some Elisha rise,
> To blaze the Gospel word.
> And fast as sheep to Jesus go,
> Many lambs recruit his fold below.'"

"To the inhabitants of the town of Manchester I would say, 'You have lost a valuable citizen and a true patriot, a decided advocate for good government, and for civil and religious liberty, and a determined enemy to tyranny and oppression. The welfare of the community at large lay near his heart. He was a true philanthropist. He loved his fellow men, and took delight in doing good to all, especially to the household of faith. In him the poor have lost a friend who did all he could to aid and assist them. He was kind and hospitable to all around him.'

"I doubt not that a great portion of this large assembly joins me in saying that we deeply sympathise with the aged widow and bereaved family of our departed brother, and I pray that this afflictive dispensation may be sanctified to their real good, that his God may be their God, and their guide through life, and that they may, if consistent with the will of our heavenly Father, meet him before the throne of God and the Lamb.

"To you, my friends, who have come here to show your respect to him whose mortal remains we have committed to the cold and silent grave, I would say, 'We know not how soon the grave may be opened for our reception, and our friends and relatives called together to follow these our mortal bodies to their long homes; for it is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment. May the Lord enable us to examine ourselves, that we may see how matters stand between God and our own souls; and may the Lord grant that it may be our happiness to be found amongst them who are born of God and built upon the Rock of Ages, clothed in the wedding garment, washed from all our sins in Immanuel's precious blood, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, that we may be found meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Though death and the grave are solemn and doleful themes, yet the believer, by faith in Christ Jesus, is enabled to triumph over the king of terrors, with all his frightful powers, as in the language of the apostle: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory (over the world, sin, death, and hell), through our Lord Jesus Christ." This was the faith of our dear brother in the prospect of death; and now, as he said on his dying bed, he is shouting "Victory," through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony, in an upper and better world.'

"May this be our happy lot, for the Lord's name and mercy's sake. Amen."

The Lord's day after his burial was ordinance-day. The pastor having been so suddenly removed from amongst them produced a very solemn feeling and concern for their future welfare. The members from a distance flocked in; and also members of sister churches, feeling a spirit of sympathy, came and sat down with them; so there was a large gathering. Before I entered upon the solemn ordinance of the Lord's supper, I made a few observations, showing them how highly they had been favoured of the Lord in sparing their pastor so long to go in and out amongst them, to break the bread of life unto them. I inquired if there were any present who were members of the church when Mr. Gadsby was first settled amongst them.

There was for a time profound silence, the deacons looking round amongst the people. At length one of them spoke, and said, "There is an old woman present who was a member when our late pastor first came amongst us; but she is deaf, and did not hear you ask the question." The following Lord's day morning, when I entered the vestry, there sat a respectable-looking old man, eighty years of age, who said, "Mr. Kershaw, I was not able to attend last Lord's day, and I have been informed that at the ordinance of the Lord's supper you asked if there were any persons present that were members of the church when our late pastor came amongst us, and there was only one. I am come into the vestry to tell you there are three left, two females and myself. It was only a few days before our minister was taken ill that I was talking with him, and saying that the time we had to stay here was very short, as we were upon the threshold of a better country, with eternal glory before us; and as I was the older man, I expected to go first; but now he is gone and I am left behind."

On Lord's day morning, February 11th, I preached his funeral sermon. Before the time of service the chapel was so filled that many of his oldest and dearest friends, although they went in good time, were not able to get within the doors, which was a great grief to them. The service commenced by singing the 469th hymn:

"My soul, this curious house of clay,
Thy present frail abode,
Must quickly fall to worms a prey,
And thou return to God."

After reading and prayer, the 158th hymn was sung:

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing."

This hymn had been much blessed to his soul, especially the second verse:

"Truly blessed is this station,
Low before the cross to lie."

The text that he desired his funeral sermon to be preached from was Eph. iii. 8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." After sermon the 667th hymn, which was composed by him, was sung; and it fully expresses the feelings of his soul, especially the last verse:

"O that my soul could love and praise him more,
His beauties trace, his majesty adore;
Live near his heart, upon his bosom lean,
Obey his voice, and all his will esteem."

At the request of the people, the funeral sermon and the address at the grave were published, and had an extensive circulation, the profits being given to the poor of the churches of Manchester and Rochdale.

Mr. Gadsby feel asleep in Jesus, January 27th, 1844, aged 71 years. His church and people have placed a marble tablet to his memory in the chapel, with the following inscription:

"To the memory of William Gadsby, Baptist Minister, who departed this life the 27th January, 1844, aged 71 years.

"He was 38 years Pastor of the Church of Christ, meeting for Divine Worship in this Chapel.

"The following lines were found penned by him, and are subjoined by way of epitaph:

"'Here rests the body of a sinner base,
Who had no hope but in electing grace;
The life, love, blood, and righteousness of God
Were his sweet theme; and these he spread abroad.'*

"This Tablet was erected by Subscription, to his remembrance, by a few affectionate surviving Friends, on the 20th of March, 1845."

The kindness of our church in allowing me to supply the Manchester people three Lord's days after Mr. G.'s death, and also on week evenings, caused the following letter to be sent:

Manchester, Feb. 26th, 1844.

"From the Church of Christ at Manchester, lately under the pastoral care of William Gadsby,

"To the Church of Christ at Rochdale, under the pastoral care of John Kershaw.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters,—Sensible as a church of the assistance the Lord bestowed upon your minister and our esteemed friend and brother Kershaw in the important service he has rendered us in the fulfilment of the last kind

* The original of this line reads thus:

"Was his sweet theme; and this he spread abroad."

I do not know who caused it to be altered; but Mr. Philpot and other good grammarians stated that the original is quite correct, in the singular number, the relative noun being the word "theme."

offices we were called upon to pay to the mortal remains of our late worthy and highly-esteemed pastor, William Gadsby, I am authorized by the church here to give you our very sincere and heartfelt thanks for your regard and feeling toward us in our afflicted condition, in suffering him to come amongst us under so painful a dispensation, when active service, as well as pity and compassion, was so essentially necessary. We give our united testimony of satisfaction in the performance of the services he has been engaged both previous to and at the funeral, and funeral services since, until all that was necessary to be done was accomplished, in testimony of love and respect to the mortal remains and memory of our late pastor. We believe that whilst your pastor felt his own weakness, the Lord was his strength, and whilst he with us who know by painful experience what we are, in and of ourselves, and that our place is in the dust, would yet notwithstanding rejoice that our sufficiency is of God. Thus, whilst we are nothing feelingly before him, we rejoice in Christ as our 'All in All!' May love and gratitude be ours, and the honour and glory the Lord's, and his alone.

"May you as a church live together in love and peace. And may the peace of God be with you.

"Signed on behalf of the church and in the hope of the gospel, "Yours affectionately,

"THOMAS WILTON, Deacon."

At the request of our people, I preached another funeral sermon to them on the first Sabbath after my return from Manchester. I was much affected when I saw that our people had put the pulpit in mourning, as the Manchester people had done theirs. Our chapel, like that of Manchester, could not contain the people that came to hear. Many funeral sermons were preached both in London and the provinces from appropriate portions of God's word. One in particular, by my friend the late Mr. Horbury, of Blackburn, from Neh. vii. 2: "For he was a faithful man, and feared God above many." When I heard of this, I said, "A more appropriate text to set forth what the man was, by the grace of God, could not be found." (I preached a funeral sermon after the death of Mr. Tiptaft, from the same text, in Gower Street chapel, London, unto whom it equally applied.)

It is well known that Mr. Gadsby was a decided advocate for the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, and a strenuous opposer of the free-will system of the Arminians. Though this was the case, the morning after his death, Robert Newton, D.D., one of the most talented and popular preachers in the Wesleyan connexion, in his prayer in Oldham Street Wesleyan chapel, Manchester, lamented that the previous evening the Lord had removed from that town by the hand of death one of his most useful and valuable ministering servants, and besought the Lord to raise up many more such men. In the concluding part of his sermon he made honourable mention of him, and the loss the church and the town had sustained in his death. He lived near Mr. Gadsby, and was well acquainted with his character and movements. As we were following him to the grave, I saw Mr. Newton looking through his window, evidently much affected. How pleasing it is for me to record that the doctrines my dear departed brother maintained proved to a demonstration that they did not lead him to sin, but to holiness; so that he was as a city set upon a hill, and the candle in its proper place to give light to all around.

For nearly thirty years Mr. Gadsby preached our anniversary sermons. The first time he came, after my settlement at Hope Chapel, we met on the Monday at Middleton as we were each returning home; when he said, "I will tell you two things that will surprise you. The first is, your people collected ten pounds yesterday." We rejoiced together, as the money was much needed, it being the largest sum ever collected since the opening of the chapel. "The second thing is, Mr. Littlewood sent his son to invite me to take breakfast with him this morning; but before I left my bed-room I was told he was dead. He preached twice yesterday, and after he retired to bed was seized with apoplexy, and died in the night." (My reader will recollect some account of Mr. Littlewood in a former part of this memoir.)

As the Lord blessed us our collections gradually increased, and Mr. Gadsby lived to see us get more than thirty pounds. After his death that dear man of God the late Mr. Cowper, of the Dicker, Sussex, being supplying a month at Manchester, we made an exchange, and he preached our anni-

versary sermons; but not being so well known we had not so many people nor so large a collection. The year following, our old pastor Mr. Warburton preached our annual sermons, and the collection was good. The next year, our people decided that I should preach the sermons. At this I was much tried, fearing the school might suffer loss. Many prayers and supplications were offered up to the Lord, both by me and the people, that his presence and blessing might be with us, and his goodness pass before us in the way as formerly. We had a fine day and many attentive hearers. I was much helped in preaching, and the collection amounted to forty pounds. My fears were dispelled, and we rejoiced together at the Lord's mindfulness of us. Since then I have always preached our school sermons, and the collections have gradually increased until they have got to sixty pounds. The Lord alone knows the exercises of my mind on these occasions, that we might have his blessed presence with us, and his arm made bare, both temporally and spiritually.

A CALL FROM THE CHURCH AT MANCHESTER.

As the Lord blessed the word to the souls of the people, the church and congregation being much upon the increase, it evidently appeared that we should have to enlarge the chapel, and as we had still a debt upon the place, we felt desirous it should be removed before we began to lay out any more money. Subscriptions were entered into, and the friends came forward willingly to give that which the Lord had given them; so we soon got free from debt, which was a comfort we much appreciated, having in years past had great difficulty to raise money to pay interest.

Whilst the people were rejoicing and anticipating the enlargement of the chapel, tidings reached them that the church at Manchester were about to give their minister a call to become their pastor, which produced a very unpleasant feeling in the minds of my Rochdale friends, and caused a special church meeting to be held, when they agreed to send the following protest:

"Rochdale, Jan. 18th, 1846.

"The Church of Jesus Christ, at Hope Chapel, Rochdale, under the pastoral care of John Kershaw,

" Unto the Church of Christ, meeting for Divine Worship in the Baptist Chapel, St. George's Road, Manchester.

" Dear Brethren and Sisters,—Having heard with much sorrow and regret that you are about to make an attempt to deprive us of our highly-respected and beloved minister, Mr. John Kershaw, as it has been communicated to us that you are intending to forward to our minister a call early next month, urging him to leave his present flock and undertake the charge of another, which cannot have those claims upon his friendship and affection which inseparably bind him to the hearts of the people with whom he has laboured in word and doctrine for above thirty years,—his great and increasing usefulness here, his having been nurtured amongst us from a mere youth, a growing attachment between himself and the whole church and congregation, no roots of bitterness springing up to trouble us, no dissension, but, contrariwise, harmony and peace, his own wish and determination heretofore to spend his life and labours amongst us, a debt just paid off, and prosperity amongst the whole,—these considerations all pointing out not only his usefulness, but, we humbly trust, the great Master's will that he should remain with us, we are free to confess that we deem it not only imprudent but absolutely wrong to entice a servant away from his work, unless that servant sees cause of dissatisfaction, either as it respects his own usefulness or the position in which he is placed; and neither of these causes having arisen, but, on the contrary, our respected and beloved pastor himself regrets, and has repudiated previous attempts to draw him away, and the unpleasant feelings thereby created amongst those who have grown up with his youth, and been strengthened with his strength.

" Again. We consider that the church at Manchester are expressly and glaringly violating the golden rule given by our Lord: 'As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' Had any other church attempted to deprive you of the labours of the late beloved Mr. Gadsby, an outcry would have been raised at the extreme folly and impropriety of the proceeding, which we should have been amongst the foremost to denounce as a violation of Christian love and Christian sympathy. Ere you commit yourselves finally to a course of proceeding

eminently calculated to cause great bitterness of spirit where all should be brotherly love and affection, we earnestly request that you will reconsider your present intentions, and ask whether it will be either prudent or honest for you to persevere in a determination which we trust will be perfectly fruitless as regards the object sought, and at the same time may be a source of discord between those who have hitherto been on terms of the greatest cordiality and goodwill, and thereby frustrate much good now arising from an interchange of friendly offices to a destitute church.

"It may be the Master's will that we, too, shall become destitute; yet, though we may be poor, we must not steal.

"We subscribe ourselves

"Yours on the Behalf of the Church
"and Congregation,
"THE DEACONS."

In reply to this, I received the following letter, which embodied the call from the church at Manchester:

"2, Cross Street, King Street, Manchester,
"Feb. 5th, 1846.

"Friend Kershaw,—Last night I received a letter from the church at Rochdale, in which we are sharply reproved for our intention to give you a call as a minister over us, and recommending us not to proceed in it.

"It appeared to me so weighty that I thought, and the other deacons too, except friends Higginson and Ashworth, that it would be best for the peace of the church at Rochdale first to read their letter to the church here, and afterwards recommend the withdrawal of the proposition made by friend Batley to give you a call; but friends Higginson and Ashworth would not be reconciled to it, but wished the matter to go forward, as between you and us, as first decided, and if read at all to read it afterwards. I was overruled, and complied with their wish. It was, however, known that a letter had been received by us, as stated by a member of ours, and it was suggested that the letter be read before any further steps were taken. It was then put to the church for them to decide whether the letter be read first or after their decision as to giving you a call; when there appeared a majority of one for the letter to be read after the call to you was settled.

"The decision of the church in the matter of a call to you to become our pastor was by a great majority. In compliance, therefore, with the decision of the church, and on their behalf, my letter to you now is, 'That you have received a call from the church at Manchester to be a pastor over us.' It is a painful situation that both you and ourselves are placed in, and of so weighty a nature that I can only commit it into the hands of the dear Redeemer, in whose hands are all circumstances and events, and who cannot be unmindful of the welfare of his church and people. May you go to him, and may he direct you in your reply to us in answer to this communication as early as lies in your power.

"Waiting your reply in anxious solicitude, as soon as your mind is settled upon the subject, I sign myself, on the behalf of the church at Manchester,

"Your affectionate Friend in the Truth,

"THOMAS WILTON, Deacon."

In the midst of these contentions between the two churches that had for so many years been upon terms of peace and love one towards another, ready at all times to aid and assist each other as far as was in their power, my mind was sorely grieved and perplexed, not knowing what to do in the matter; but my eyes were up unto the Lord. It was said by many that as there was a more extensive field of usefulness at Manchester than at Rochdale, it was my duty to go. My mind was much concerned to do that which was right and would be well pleasing in the sight of the Lord, that I might have his sanction and approbation.

About this time I went to supply at Byrom Street (late Medley's), Liverpool. On the Saturday night, these things were so much on my mind that I had little sleep. When I arose in the morning, I kneeled down and asked wisdom of the Lord, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and felt willing to leave myself in the Lord's hands to dispose of me as would be most for his honour and glory and the welfare of Zion. I opened a Bible that lay upon the table, with a desire to be guided by the word of the Lord. The first words my eyes caught sight of were Jer. xlv. 5: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." And the words, "I will be with thee and bless thee" came to my

mind with such power that I fell on my knees again, and said, "Dear Lord, I will not seek great things for myself, but abide where thou hast placed me for so many years, and blessed my poor imperfect labours to the souls of thy people." From this time I lost the burden of going to Manchester, and was quite satisfied to abide with the dear flock of Christ at Rochdale, and have never had reason to repent it, but to be thankful to the Lord for his guidance and direction in this important affair.

The Lord having settled my mind upon the subject, I sent the church at Manchester the following answer to their call:

"To the Church of Jesus Christ meeting for Divine Worship in the Baptist Chapel, St. George's Road, Manchester.

"My dear Brethren and Sisters in the Lord,—May grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"It is now more than thirty years since the Lord first sent me amongst you, occasionally to preach the word of life. During the above time I have felt a growing attachment to you, as a church and congregation of the saints of the most high God. The union that existed between your late pastor, dear Mr. Gadsby, and myself was a strong and growing attachment to each other up to his death. From the love I have to the Lord and to you his church and people, I have felt a pleasure in doing all that has been in my power for you, so far as consistent with my engagements and attachments to the people of my charge.

"My dear friends, I have received your call to become your pastor, to go in and out before the Lord and you, to break the bread of life to his hungry poor people, who are longing to be fed with the provision of his house. You very prudently exhort me to go to the Lord, and entreat him to direct me in giving an answer to your request. From the time your deacons told me of your intention to give me a call, and since I have received it, the matter has been very much upon my mind both by day and night; and the more I have pondered it over in my heart and prayed about it, the more have I felt it to be my duty to abide with the church and congregation meeting for divine worship at Hope Chapel, Rochdale. Your attempt to remove

me from them has proved more and more their growing attachment to me, as their servant for Jesus' sake, and has tended to increase my love and regard for them. This being the true state of the case, I do, in the fear of the Lord, answer your call to become your pastor in the negative. But though I cannot come amongst you as your pastor, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, that the Lord according to his promise will give you a pastor after his own heart, to feed you with knowledge and understanding; for thus saith the Lord God, 'I will yet be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.'

"The Lord keep you with your hearts and eyes up unto him, that his presence and blessing may be with you. And that peace may be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces, is the prayer of

"Your old and true, though unworthy Friend and Brother in the Truth as it is in Jesus Christ,

"JOHN KERSHAW.

"Hope Chapel House, Rochdale, Feb. 27th, 1846."

The Lord's day after I had given the above answer was my twenty-ninth anniversary as pastor of the church at Rochdale. For the satisfaction of my own people, I told the church and congregation from the pulpit that I had answered the call in the negative, and read them a copy of my letter, which was pleasing and satisfactory to all. It was read at Manchester about the same time I was reading it at home.

I am happy to say that my declining their call made no breach between me and my Manchester friends. As proof of this I continued to supply them occasionally, and did all I could to help them until their present minister, Mr. Taylor, was settled over them; after which I received a memorial from the church, congregation, and Sabbath school, requesting me to attend their annual tea meeting on new year's day, when they would, as a token of respect in remembrance of former services, present me with a portrait of myself, by the same artist and in the same style as their late pastor's had been taken. I attended their tea meeting as requested, and the portrait was presented by Mr. Taylor in the presence of many, both ministers and people. I acknowledged their kindness in a speech which took me more than an hour,

narrating many circumstances relative to their late pastor and myself, in which they appeared to take great interest.

The next day the testimonial was sent, and put up in my parlour, without any cost to me, and was considered by competent judges to be well executed. I hope ever to retain a grateful remembrance of the many kindnesses I have received from them in years gone by.

My call to Manchester caused considerable anxiety, not only amongst my own people, but many professors of religion in the town and neighbourhood, who were watching the result. Some said, "Although he has denied other calls, he will go to Manchester, where he is so well known, and will have a much larger salary." Many exhortations and cautions were given me to stand my ground; for if I did not it would open the mouths of infidels, which my conduct so far had been the means of stopping, who are often saying that parsons are more for the fleece than the flock; but they had been constrained to say that John Kershaw, of Hope Chapel, was an exception.

From the above, I think my reader will most readily admit that my abiding at Rochdale was well pleasing to the Lord, to the people of my charge, and to many others who love and fear God, and confounding to the enemies of truth. My soul desires to be thankful to the Lord, who by his grace has enabled me to obey the exhortation given by Peter (1 Pet. ii. 15): "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

A TESTIMONIAL.

The times of my being called by other churches to leave the people of my charge having passed over me (see 1 Chron. 29, 30), my friends felt it their duty to make an acknowledgment of my kindness in abiding with them, not asking for an advance of salary; and they entered into a subscription that they might present me with a substantial token of their love and esteem. So privately was this done that I knew nothing about it till very near the time they had decided upon giving it to me, which was at our annual tea meeting, held in the beginning of the new year, 1847. Two of my Scotch friends volunteered to collect the money, going only amongst those who could give without hurting themselves,

though in many instances the poor begged to be allowed to give their mite. Several persons in the town also willingly gave, amongst whom was John Bright, M.P., who, when he heard of it, said, "Although we Friends do not usually give to support ministers of religion, I know John Kershaw to be a man worthy of encouragement, and I will give £5."

As the time drew near, and preparations for the meeting were being made, the Lord impressed it upon my mind, when on my knees in my closet, that whatever was given me I would return towards the enlargement of the chapel. This I kept to myself until the meeting took place. When the time came, the chapel was crowded with people. My friend Thomas Turner, of Hamer Hall (nephew of Thomas Niven), addressed the meeting in a very appropriate speech for the occasion; at the close of which he presented me with a purse containing sixty sovereigns. I received it, and thanked the friends for their great kindness; and then holding the purse in my hand I told them I should not put it into my pocket, but return it to Mr. Turner to put it into Fenton and Roby's bank, towards the enlargement of the chapel, as they all knew we wanted more room to accommodate the people that came to hear the word of the Lord. And if the chapel was enlarged within two years from that time, I would make the sum into one hundred pounds. At this unexpected announcement the people were greatly surprised, and a feeling of gratitude evidenced itself on their countenances. This act, which I believe was of God, tended greatly to endear me to my people, and establish my character in the town and neighbourhood, and to confound the infidel.

DIVISION AT MANCHESTER.

Although I did not accept the call of my Manchester friends, I greatly esteemed them, and had to stand by them and defend the truths preached by their late pastor, and also his character and reputation. One of the greatest trials he ever passed through was a division that took place in his church the summer before his death, in consequence of the following errors being imbibed by some of the people, viz., "That a child of God cannot backslide;" "That God does not chastise his children for sin;" and "That sin in the

thought of the heart is as great an offence to God as sin in the outward action." Such was the confusion these errors caused, and the reproach heaped upon Mr. Gadsby for opposing them and their advocates, that I felt it my duty to enter my protest against them, and defend the truth. Notice of this was given from the pulpit of St. George's Road chapel. When the time came, each contending party sent a reporter to take down the sermon, which was published at the unanimous request of the church, and had an extensive circulation, being reviewed, approved, and recommended by the editors of several magazines of decided truth of that day. The advocates of these errors took a large chapel, which they could not support, then built a smaller one, and had several ministers settled over them; but differences arising amongst themselves, they became scattered; and not being of God, it has long since come to nought. The hand of the Lord went out against them in providence. Some came to ruin in their circumstances, and others were sorely afflicted in both body and mind, and came to a miserable end, as Mr. Gadsby on his death-bed foretold would be the case. I am a living witness that the Lord has either in judgment or mercy sorely chastised many of the advocates of the above errors; so that they have paid dearly for their folly. Some of the more sober minded have long since returned to the fold from which they were beguiled; and I am happy to say that the church, congregation, and Sabbath school continue to prosper.

Before I leave this painful part of my narrative, I would give a word of caution to members of churches, as Paul did to the elders of the church at Ephesus,—to beware of men who speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them; and again to mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them who by their good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (Acts xx. 30; Rom. xvi. 17, 18.) The path of a minister of Christ is a chequered scene. He has many trials both from within and without; but the Lord is faithful to his promise, to be with them to the end, and has declared that his word spoken by them shall not return unto him void, but accomplish that which he pleaseth; and it gladdens their hearts to see the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified.

A REMARKABLE DISPLAY OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE.

One of the greatest displays of the power and sovereign discriminating grace of God that I have witnessed in the course of my ministry took place about this time, in the conversion of one of the inhabitants of the town (Rochdale), John Roby, who, when speaking of himself, like Paul before King Agrippa, often referred to his manner of life before called by grace. He was one of the most talented, learned men in the town, an author and a lecturer; he published his "Continental Tour," "The Traditions of Lancashire," and other works. His lectures upon botany and other sciences commanded great attention in our town, as well as in Manchester, Liverpool, and Preston. At the time of his call by grace, he had engagements at all the above places, which his awakened conscience would not allow him to fulfil. As a man of business, he stood high, being for more than twenty years partner and manager of the well-known bank of Fenton and Roby. As a professor of religion, he was the right-hand man of the vicar, a great advocate of the union of Church and State, and of rigid Conservative principles; and, like Saul of Tarsus, verily thought he was doing God service; but, to use his own words, he "had only a form of godliness, but knew nothing of the power," being filled with pride and self-importance. One Monday, in the summer of 1844, he called upon me for the first time. I wondered what he could want, and begged of him to be seated, perceiving by his countenance that something of great importance was on his mind. After a pause, he said, "Mr. Kershaw, I have called to have some conversation upon soul matters;" and, with tears in his eyes, he added, "I have such a feeling sight and sense of the depravity of my nature, the evils of my heart, the terrors of the Lord, as an angry God in his law, and am so assailed with the temptations of the devil that I have no rest day nor night." Every sentence as he spoke dropped into my soul, and filled my mind with wonder. In the course of my ministerial labours many persons have come to speak to me upon soul matters, but none with which I was more surprised. I told him I was glad to hear what he had said, but was sorry that I had not time to enter into conversation

with him, as I had to dine, and get to the station by two o'clock, to take train for York, on my way to Helmsley Blackmoor, where I was engaged to preach the word of life. He inquired when I should return. I replied, "On Friday afternoon (D.V.)." He invited me to his house to tea on that day, and I consented to go. The account he gave of the Lord's meeting with him is as follows: He had been with his family at the sea-side on the Cheshire coast, opposite Liverpool. They went to one of the churches on a Lord's day morning; but he was in nowise pleased with the sermon, as it was not in so elegant a style of language as he liked. To use his own words, the preaching he liked best was excellence of speech of man's wisdom, the beauty of rhetoric, which pleases the ear of the learned and polite, who neither know themselves nor the Lord. As they returned, he told his wife he should hear the man no more. She replied, "There is a beautiful new church a short distance from here, and I have heard they have a very clever man for their minister." He was pleased with the thoughts of being better entertained in the evening. They went in good time, and were much pleased with the beauty of its architecture. Being put into a pew which commanded a good view of the communion place, Mr. Roby began to admire the neatness of the gilt letters in the Lord's prayer and ten commandments. As he read the just and holy law of God, a light and a power from the Lord entered into his soul, such as he had never felt before. He could not refrain from bursting into tears. He saw himself, in the glass of God's law, by which, in the hand of the Spirit, is the knowledge of sin, to be a law-breaker, a transgressor, both in thoughts, words, and deeds. An awful terror and dread came upon him, and he sat and trembled, feeling himself arraigned at the bar of God in his conscience, and that the Lord would be just in his condemnation. He was so overwhelmed that neither the singing, the prayers, nor the preaching had any effect upon his mind. He was in the state the Lord speaks of by the prophet Isaiah (lxvi. 2): "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word;" and he returned home with very different feelings to those he left with. I have often heard him say he was like Belshazzar the king after he had seen the man's handwriting on the

wall of the palace: "Tekel, Tekel, Thou are weighed in the balance and found wanting." His countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him; so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another; and it was with difficulty he reached home.

Pause, my reader, and think of what the Lord says in Ps. cx. 3: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" for this was truly the day of the Lord's power in Mr. Roby's soul. What a fulfilment of that word of the Lord in Isa. ii. 11: "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

He returned to Rochdale with a wounded spirit and heavy heart, which made him stoop. He could no longer associate with the gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, only so far as business demanded. They were amazed to see him sunk so low, and feared he was going out of his mind. He could not find any comfort in the church; neither the prayers nor the sermons, however elegant the style, had any charms for him. The vicar expressed great surprise and sorrow at his leaving the church; but he had become a new creature. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new. The work of the Spirit in the conviction of sin by the law was very deep and powerful, as in Paul, who said, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Luther deeply felt the same; so did John Bunyan, William Huntington, William Gadsby, and many others who have been able ministers, not of the letter but of the Spirit.

Poor Roby was now like David, in the horrible pit and miry clay, shut up as in prison, as one of God's elect crying day and night unto the Lord for mercy. He was sorely tempted that he had sinned away the day of grace, or committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, and that there was nothing for him but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. In these deep waters of affliction he had no one to speak to that could give him a word of comfort or encouragement. His daily cry was,

> "What shall I do, or whither flee,
> To escape the vengeance due to me?"

Some of the clergymen with whom he had been familiar

pitied him, and would have comforted him if they could; but as they had never felt either the condemnation or consolation, as Paul had, they could not comfort others with the same comfort wherewith they themselves had been comforted of God. He thought of two or three persons in the town among the Dissenters who had long made a profession of religion, and he thought he would speak to them. He first went to an old deacon of the Independent church; but as this man had never had the fallow ground of his heart broken up by the plough of God's law, nor been held fast in prison and soul-bondage, he could not tell what to make of him, but feared he had been guilty of some great crime, which brought so much terror and dread into his soul; "but," said he, "let that be as it may, all you have to do is to believe in Jesus and you shall be saved." The next person he went to was an old Scotchman, a deacon of a Baptist church, who told him all that he had to do was to take God at his word, who had said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" and if he believed that and called upon the name of the Lord he would be saved. He replied that he had believed all this from a child, and had composed and published essays and odes upon the same; but such a faith did not give him deliverance from the trouble he was sinking under. In all this he was as "a barbarian" to the deacon, who had never felt the terrors of the Lord nor the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. The third person he went to was a local preacher amongst the Wesleyans, who listened to his tale, which was like that of the prophet, who said, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." But he also, being a stranger to such soul-exercises, and the power of the Spirit in the work of faith in the soul, spoke as if faith was of himself, and told him if he did not believe to the saving of his soul, some heavy judgment would come upon him for his unbelief. All such advisers, instead of being a comfort, added to his distress, and made him stagger like a drunken man at his wits' end.

After this, one evening returning home from the bank, greatly distressed, he found tea prepared for him, but could not partake of it, for he felt as if his heart would burst, and he could not refrain from weeping. He told his wife he

would take a walk into the fields. As he went along he felt much oppressed and ready to sink, reasoning thus: "O Lord, I must be an out-of-the-way sinner! These three old men I have been to, who have been so long serving thee, and from whom I had hoped to get some advice and comfort, do not appear to have such a wicked heart as mine, nor know anything about the wretchedness, condemnation, and temptations that my poor soul is wading through. Surely I must be one of the vilest and chief of sinners!" He often told me if the earth had opened and swallowed him up, he should not have been surprised.

Whilst thus overwhelmed with grief, it was as if he heard a voice, saying, "Go, open your mind to John Kershaw, of Hope Chapel. He knows and understands these things, and he will speak words of comfort to you." Amazed, he turned round to see if any person was near, but saw no one. Whilst he thought upon this, it was as if the voice spoke the second time: "What did he say when you heard him preach?" In giving me a relation of this, he said, "I had you presented to the eye of my mind as you stood in the pulpit, and lifted up your hand and said, 'Friends, I will tell you how I felt in my own soul this last week. One morning, in family worship, I was much favoured with sweet communion with the Lord and nearness of access to him at a throne of grace, feeling his sweet love shed abroad in my heart. It was indeed a time of refreshing. In the course of the morning I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to go into my closet that I might have a little more sweet communion with the Lord. In a moment another feeling of opposition and rebellion rose up in my mind against it, which said, "Why pray so much?" O the horrid feelings that arose in my poor soul, and everything that is Godlike, which made my soul to tremble. This, my friends, is the inward conflict Paul speaks of in Gal. v. 17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'" As the Holy Spirit brought you and the things you then said to my remembrance, I said, "Dear Lord, this is like the bread cast upon the waters, seen after many days; for it is more than twenty years since I was in Hope Chapel, and heard Mr. Kershaw say these things."

According to the impression made upon his mind at this time, he called upon me as above stated, and that he fully realised the truth thereof will soon appear.

One evening, having been out upon my Master's business, on my return home I met with a gentleman I had long known as a fellow-townsman, a professor of religion amongst the Independents, who said, "I am glad to see you, as I want to have a little conversation with you. I have been six weeks from home with my family in Wales, to see the beauty of the country. We returned home last week, and I went to the bank about my affairs. Having transacted my business, Mr. Roby said, 'You have got home again. How have you enjoyed your tour amongst the Welsh mountains?' I told him I was much pleased with the scenery and the beauties of creation, and mentioned the principal places we had visited. He listened attentively to all I had to say, and replied, 'I have been to all the places you have named and several others in Wales, and I have been through the Highlands of Scotland, and you know I have published my tour on the continent; and in these things I have had great delight; but I can assure you that I now feel ten times more real pleasure in going up to Hope Chapel to John Kershaw's, and sitting at his feet to be taught by him the way of salvation, than in all I ever heard or saw before.'" As my friend told me this, he turned towards me and stopped me in the road, adding, "I was never filled with so much surprise at anything that was ever spoken to me by any man as what he said on that occasion, and I have no doubt of the truth of it, for he spoke with such feeling and humility; and I consider it a great display of the power and grace of God. He will become a blessing to the town, and move in a different circle than that in which he has done hitherto." This prediction was true; for he had to leave the church and become a regular hearer at Hope Chapel. When this was sounded abroad, several gentlemen came to the chapel to see if it really was so.

Mr. R. now began to keep different company. He had formerly visited at the vicarage, but now he became a frequent visitor at Hope Chapel house. Our agreement was to have our tea at each other's house weekly, which gave us the opportunity of having much spiritual conver-

sation, reading, and prayer. When he spoke of coming to Hope Chapel twenty years before, I remembered it, and where he sat. Being once in conversation on this subject at a friend's house, he said, "I was a little too soon at the chapel, and opened a hymn book that was in the pew, and saw that Mr. Gadsby had altered one of Dr. Watts's hymns, and I felt offended that such a man as Gadsby should attempt to correct Dr. Watts." The hymn referred to is the seventh in the First Book of Dr. Watts, and Hymn 56 in Gadsby's Selection:

"Let every mortal ear attend,
And every heart rejoice."

Mr. Gadsby has rendered it:

"Let every open ear attend,
And broken heart rejoice."

"But," said Mr. R., "since the Lord has been graciously pleased to open my heart and ears, I see great beauty and propriety in the alteration; for I am persuaded that no poor sinner can joyfully hear the gospel's joyful sound till God does open his heart and ears, and give him to see and feel his need of it."

Mr. Roby was favoured with a poetical gift and an ear for music, and composed some good tunes. On one occasion, when in great distress of soul, in the silent watches of the night, the following lines were brought to his remembrance:

"When overwhelm'd with grief,
My heart within me dies;
Helpless, and far from all relief,
To heaven I lift mine eyes;"

which was so expressive of the feelings of his soul that in meditating upon it he composed a good tune, which we often sing to it.

Also the 51st Psalm; Gadsby's Selection, 761:

"Show pity, Lord! O Lord, forgive!
Let a repenting rebel live.
Are not thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in thee?"

The whole of this hymn was so expressive of his soul-feelings that he composed a tune for it. I hope never to forget being with him at my friend Mr. Turner's, Hamer

Hall, and seeing him play the piano and sing the above hymn to the tune he had composed for it with tears trickling down his cheeks. That noble and precious hymn of Dr. Ryland's:

"Sov'reign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise,"

was also a pre-eminent favourite with him; for which he likewise composed a tune, which was sung to it when I preached his funeral sermon. He greatly delighted in Mr. Hart's hymns, although he did not consider their style so sublime as Dr. Watts's; yet he used to say that he had read no hymns in which there was so much gospel truth expressed in so few words, in doctrine, experience, and practice, as in Mr. Hart's. Many of Mr. Gadsby's own hymns were also much blessed to his soul, especially those upon the inward conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.

The deep exercises of his soul were such as tended greatly to impair his health, when his medical attendant told him that he had done all for him that his skill and medicine could do, and he recommended him to go to Malvern to try the cold water system practised there. Whilst at Malvern the Lord was graciously pleased to bring his soul out of bondage into the liberty of the gospel wherewith Christ makes his people free. The joy of his heart was as great as his distress had been before. Like David, who in the joy of his heart danced before the ark of the covenant of the God of Israel, his soul danced within him, whilst with the psalmist he sang as in Ps. ciii.: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases," &c.

My spiritual reader will be ready to inquire as to the means of his deliverance. This was as follows: In the silent watches of the night, when sighing and groaning, as he had been wont to do for so many months, the blessed Spirit, whose office it is to glorify Christ, was graciously pleased to apply the pardoning love and blood of Jesus to his soul, thereby giving him the knowledge of his salvation by the remission of his sins. Many precious portions of God's word flowed into his soul, as streams from the river which gladdens the hearts of the citizens of Zion. His

bodily health was improved, so that he returned to Rochdale a new man, in the feelings of his soul and in his bodily health. I well remember about this time preaching from Ps. cxix. 103: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste: yea, sweeter than honey to my month." After the sermon we sang:

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear."

After service, our deacon and leading singer said, "Mr. Roby, I never heard you sing so loud and so well before;" when he replied, "Thomas, the truths we have been hearing are the joy and rejoicing of my soul; and, feeling the power and sweetness of them, I have been singing with melody in my heart, giving thanks to the Lord." With the joy of these things in exercise, he called upon me, and said, "I want you to go with me down to the bank, and two or three other places." When we got into the street, he requested me to take hold of his arm. I replied, "We can walk along and converse without that;" but he urged me to do it, saying, "I have a reason for it, which is this. When I began to attend your ministry and keep your company, it was said by many that I was insane; but now they have altered their opinion, and say they never saw me looking better nor appear more cheerful; and I want them to see that my attachment to you and the truths you maintain is not abated, now that they acknowledge I am in my right mind, and that I am not ashamed of you nor the doctrines you preach."

Soon after this he began to speak a little in the name of the Lord, and the last Sabbath he spent amongst us he preached in the afternoon to a crowded and attentive audience, from Matt. v. 4: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." On which occasion he spoke as one that had tasted and handled the truth as recorded by the prophet Isaiah (lxi. 3): "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," &c. Many of his former acquaintances were present, and in the latter part of his discourse he gave an account of the Lord's bringing him amongst us, and of

the spiritual benefit he had received under the preaching of the word and Christian conversation.

In the month of June, 1850, he made arrangements to spend some time in Edinburgh. The last letter I received from him was dated from Liverpool, June 18th. The Monday following he left Liverpool in a fine vessel called the "Orion," with many other passengers, several of considerable note, for Glasgow. The next morning, about break of day, the sea being calm, the vessel was run upon a rock. It split, and speedily sank. Many of the passengers were drowned, Mr. Roby being amongst the number. His wife and daughter, who were also in the vessel, were saved. The same week I had been out preaching the gospel, and returning home by rail, a person who had been at Liverpool told me that news had come that the "Orion" was wrecked, and many lives lost. When I reached the station, a physician of our town said to me, "This is a sad calamity. Your friend Mr. Roby sailed in the vessel that is lost." I trembled, fearing he might be one of those that were drowned, and I called at the bank to inquire. They said they could not tell me, but they had written to Liverpool to their agent for information, and expected an answer in half an hour. I returned home, but could not rest in the house. I took a private walk, full of anxiety. On returning I was told that word had been sent from the bank that Mr. Roby was amongst the drowned. What a blow was this to me, blighting all my expectations of his future usefulness to the church of God! How true is the word of the Lord: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." (Isa. lv. 8.)

Mr. Roby was half-brother to Mr. William Roby, Independent minister, of Manchester, of whom I have made mention; and of whom Mr. Warburton writes in his Memoir, pages 16, 17, that it was under his ministry he was brought out of bondage into gospel liberty. But Mr. John Roby was many years his junior. This will in some measure account for what follows: When Mr. Roby the banker first came to Rochdale, he attended the Independent chapel, and had a family vault there; so that his body, when found, was brought to Rochdale and buried in his own vault. At the request of the widow, I delivered the address in the chapel to many who had come to show their

last token of respect to his remains. Amongst them were several of the authorities of the town, who never before attended service in a dissenting place of worship, nor had heard my voice from a pulpit. As I surveyed the people, I thought of the following lines:

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,"

and prayed the Lord to assist me in speaking. My own friends said they never heard me speak with greater liberty nor solemnity.

The following Lord's day but one I preached his funeral sermon from I. Cor. xv. 10: "By the grace of God, I am what I am," which gave me the opportunity of relating many of the things that I have been recording.

I have many letters on the table before me that I received from him whilst he was at Malvern, Cheltenham, and other places, and also his diary, which he for a time kept, and which confirmed the things that I have been stating. It would swell my narrative to insert them. He wrote a long letter to his friend Mr. Frederick Baines, of Leeds, of which I begged a copy at the time it was sent, and forwarded it to the editor of the "Gospel Standard," and it was published in the Dec. No., 1845, entitled "The Gospel Plan," and signed "R., Rochdale." The reading of the above letter will well repay a spiritual mind. There is also in the Sept. No. of the "Gospel Standard" of the same year a piece of poetry composed by him, which it is likely many of my readers have not seen, not having the "Gospel Standard" of so early a date. It was on the following texts: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." (Matt. viii. 2.) "They continually say unto me, "Where is thy God?" (Ps. xlii. 3.)

"A leper foul I am,
The malady I feel;
No power but thine can cleanse my guilt,
No hand but thine can heal.

"My inward foes they mock
My misery and pain:
'Where is thy God? He hears thee not;
Thy simple suit refrain.

"'Thy life is spent in sighs,
Thy years in fruitless grief;
Had he thy groaning heard, ere this
He must have sent relief.

"'Prithee give o'er. His ear
Is wearied with thy prayer;
He spurns thy suit, thy plea denies;
Hope not deliverance there.

"'What! Such a mass of guilt,
Rebellion, enmity,
Presume his presence to pollute,
E'en on thy bended knee?'

"Such, Lord, the cruel taunts
My trembling soul assail;
Nor can I answer them a word
While doubts and fears prevail.

"'Tis thou alone must give
The answer; 'tis not mine.
The adversary's mouth to stop,
That word alone is thine."

ENLARGEMENT OF HOPE CHAPEL.

But to return to my own narrative. The agitation of my leaving the people of my charge having subsided, I hope never more to return, I was ready to say with Paul, "From henceforth let no man trouble me" (Gal. vi. 17), in attempting to move me from where the Lord hath settled and blessed me for so many years. By the Holy Spirit and grace of God, I was constrained more earnestly and fervently to give myself unto reading, meditation, and prayer, that the blessing of the Lord might more abundantly rest upon my ministerial labours in the conversion of sinners to God and the edification of saints, and that I might be a growing "example to the flock of God in every good word and work;" and say as with David, "The Lord hath heard my prayer, and hath done great things for us;" for I believe he has, as the sequel will declare.

The Lord appeared in his beauty to build the temple. We were increased, and poor sinners flocked in to hear the word, like doves to their windows; so that the cry was often heard, "We want room to accommodate the people who come to hear the gospel's joyful sound." Having previously for many years felt the weight of a heavy chapel debt, I was very backward to begin to enlarge, until I saw the moving of the pillar of the cloud and fire. At length the unanimous voice of the church and congregation

was, "We must have the chapel enlarged," and a willingness was shown to provide the means to do it; so that I both saw and felt it to be our duty to arise and build. I cannot describe the strong cries and wrestlings, the earnest desires I had that the Lord, as the Breaker, would cause his goodness to go before us in the way and provide the means, so that when we re-opened we might be free from debt. Knowing that example was more powerful than precept, I felt it my duty to do all I could out of my own purse, as well as give my unwearied exertions to accomplish so desirable an end.

My reader will recollect that the sixty pounds my friends gave me I promised to make into one hundred if the chapel was enlarged within two years. The Lord had impressed it upon my mind, whilst upon my knees in prayer, to make the sixty pounds into one hundred, feeling persuaded he would enable me to do so. When this was made known it greatly encouraged the people. A subscription was entered into, and four of my friends gave fifty pounds each. As my old begging book, which I took with me to London, was not full, the case of the enlargement of the chapel was entered in it; for as Goliath's sword to David, no new book could be like this one to me.

The first person I waited upon privately was our senior magistrate, from an impression I had upon my mind that he had a respect for me as a neighbour, believing if I could get his name, and a sovereign or two, it would have its effect with others. He received me very kindly, saying he understood that our chapel had for some time been too small. He carefully examined my book, the names and sums put down, and said, "Although I am a Churchman, I am no enemy to Dissenters," and, putting a £5 note upon the book, said, "It is with the greatest pleasure I give you this towards the enlargement of your chapel, for I have had my eyes upon you for more than thirty years. You have been a man of peace, plodding about the town, visiting and relieving the sick and afflicted, doing all the good you could; and such men as you we must and will stand by and support." As he spoke these words, the language of Paul came powerfully to my mind (Rom. xiii. 3): "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."

His liberality had the desired effect, as four of the other magistrates followed his example, also many other gentlemen in the town and neighbourhood. In looking over my list of subscribers, the magistrate first named noticed the name of Elizabeth Chadwick, who had put down fifty pounds, and inquired who she was. I told him she was a widow woman, who kept a baker's and provision shop; that her first husband was my son William, who died of cholera, and that her second husband was also dead, leaving her with two small children. He answered that he thought fifty pounds was too much for her to give. I said that I had thought the same; but when she gave me her reasons for doing so I was obliged to take it. He inquired what the circumstances were. I asked him for a Bible, as in giving him the account I should have to read him a portion of it, which led to it. I then told him, as she was a widow woman and a member of our church, I felt it my duty to call upon her every week, and on a recent visit I asked her what she was thinking of giving to the enlargement of the chapel. She replied, "If you will come to your tea next Monday, I will tell you." I went accordingly, and renewed the inquiry, when she got her Bible and said, "I need not tell you that when my late husband died, he left me in insolvent circumstances, and had it not been for you and my uncle standing by me, and helping me, my creditors would have come upon me and sold me up, and my poor children and I would not have had a bed to lie down upon, nor a seat to sit on. Also I was in a poor state of health, encompassed with these difficulties, which often bowed me down, both in body and mind. I often went into my closet to tell the Lord my troubles, and to plead his promise, to be the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. On one of these occasions, when faint and ready to give all up, I opened the Bible to seek a little comfort there. As the Lord would have it, I opened to the twenty-eighth chapter of Genesis, and began to read it, and I felt encouraged, especially when I read the fifteenth verse, where the Lord promised Jacob that he would never leave him nor forsake him, &c. The Holy Spirit bore witness with my spirit that Jacob's God was my God, and that he would never leave nor forsake me. He enabled me to cast my burden and care upon him who cared for me, and

would sustain and make a way for me. My mind was so supported and comforted in reading this chapter that I went into my chamber, and, like Daniel, kneeled before the Lord to thank and bless his dear name; and, like Jacob, I vowed unto the Lord, saying, 'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and prosper me in my business, so that I can pay my creditors, whatever he might give me more, I would give a tenth to his house;' for at that time I had an impression on my mind that the chapel would have to be enlarged. And the reason I asked you to home to-day is that I might have time to reckon what I am worth, and what a tenth would be, and I find it will be fifty pounds." (This at the proper time she gave me in sovereigns.)

When the worthy magistrate heard this relation, he said, "God bless Betty Chadwick. It is the best tale I ever heard. Under these circumstances you could not but take it."

We engaged an architect to draw the plan and superintend the work. As the building went on, I was constantly engaged in preaching and collecting money. I never went from home but I took my begging case with me, always going into my closet and on my knees with my book in my hand beseeching the Lord to be with me. Knowing that the gold and silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, and that all hearts are in his hand, my eyes were up unto him that his good hand might be with me, as it was with his servant Nehemiah in the building of the walls of Jerusalem. (Neh. ii. 18.) The dear Lord heard my prayer; as the money was wanted, it came. Some of my neighbours, when I met them in the street, entreated me not to forget them, but to allow them to help us. Others, when I met them, asked how we were getting on with the chapel, and gave me money without asking for it. Others came up and looked on, and then came into the house to give me their money. In some cases, when waiting at railway stations, persons that I knew not would inquire respecting the alteration of the chapel, and when we parted leave gold in my hand, saying, "The Lord bless you." Our own people in this good work gave according to their ability. Like the horses in Pharaoh's chariot, they pulled together

to accomplish the work. The poorest of them who was receiving relief from the church begged to be allowed to give something, which favour was granted. This was so pleasing to some who had this world's goods that they had more given them in return than they gave. As the Lord sent the money, I took it to Mr. Turner, who was the treasurer. He was greatly surprised to see the goodness of the Lord in appearing for us, often wondering where it had come from; when I told him my Lord and Master had sent it in answer to prayer.

The Friday before the Lord's day on which we re-opened I met with a gentleman of considerable property, a deacon of the Independent church, who said, "I understand you are expecting, after your opening services, to be free of debt." I told him that had been the desire of my heart from the commencement of the work, and I believed it would be so. He then gave me a sovereign, and when we parted he said, "Ah, my friend, it has cost you thirty years to do this. Not another minister in the town could have done it these bad times."

The opening day came, which was the third Lord's day in August, 1848. And O the cries of my soul that the Lord might be with us, and power attend the preached word. We had a little rain in the morning, but it soon cleared up, and we had a fine day. My text in the morning was: "Be ye also enlarged." (II. Cor. vi. 13.) Mr. Giles, of Chester, preached in the afternoon from Isa. lx. 7: "I will glorify the house of my glory." This also was Mr. Gadsby's text when the chapel was first opened, on Whit-Wednesday, 1811. My evening text was Rev. xix. 6: "Saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." The Lord helped me much in saying unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth." The Lord blessed the word, our congregations were large, and our collections were more than sixty pounds, which more than covered all expenses. When this was announced, the whole assembly rose, and sang:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

This was a memorable day to me, as I had another "Ebenezer" to set up, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

Our treasurer ordered all the tradespeople who had not

received their full money to meet in the vestry the Wednesday following. They all came and were honourably paid. I was looking on, and could not help smiling when some of them said, "We have been so kindly treated that we must return you something for the chapel." It is with pleasure and thankfulness to the Lord that I record that we had not a shilling promised that was not punctually paid; which proved that my friends as well as myself were in earnest, and that the hearts of both poor and rich were in the work. When all was settled there was something over, and the committee, being so well satisfied with the architect and his reasonable charge, agreed to send him a letter of commendation and enclose a £5 note. He thanked us for the character we had given him, and for the £5, which, he said, he did not need; and as we should soon want a new schoolroom, it should be his subscription towards it.

The cost of the enlargement was nearly £900. The old chapel would seat four hundred persons, and we have now sittings in the pews for seven hundred and thirty, besides the benches.

I have before mentioned that the Lord laid it upon my mind to make the £60 I had promised into £100, and that he would enable me to do so, even though it might for a time put me about, which I quite expected it would do. This had a very beneficial effect upon the minds of the people, as many said, "If parson is giving so much out of his small income (up to this time I had never received more than £80 per year from the chapel), I am sure we must do all we can to help him." Having done this, I found before my quarter's salary became due I should not be able to walk by one of my favourite rules: "Owe no man anything;" for it had long been sweet to me, and still is, for everything to be paid for before it comes into the house, and to be able to walk the streets without fear of meeting any one to whom I was in debt; also to go to bed without the thoughts of being troubled with debts and creditors. Some may smile at these things, and count them as trifles; but in former days such was the distress of my mind, through straitened circumstances, that I lost many hours of sleep, and even to this time I dream about them, especially about my rent, and awake in great trouble, thankful to find it is but a dream, and that I have no rent to pay, having lived

in the chapel house more than fifty years. I went to one of my friends, and asked him if he would lend me £10 till quarter-day if I should need it. He told me I could have £10 or £20, and to go when I wanted it. I thanked him, and said I thought I could do without any for a fortnight; but my blessed Lord did not see fit that I should borrow and be in debt, for in a day or two after, as I was in my vestry before breakfast with my God and my Bible, the postman came with a registered letter, which I opened and found therein a £10 note. The following is a verbatim copy of the letter:—

"Dear Sir,—It is hoped that the enclosed £10 note will prove a seasonable mite to you at the present time; and if so you will know whom to thank for it; and may he be pleased to vouchsafe unto you the spirit of praise to do so. The silver and the gold belong to the Lord, and so do the cattle on a thousand hills. A line to acknowledge the receipt of this will oblige the writer, who signs himself 'Ignotus.' Please to direct Mr. C. B., Post Office, Twickenham, Middlesex. To be left till called for."

In our family worship that morning we had cause for double thanksgiving, not only for our daily mercies, but for such a special interposition of the Lord's providence which had appeared for us in the time of need, and was also a great confirmation that I had done right in what I had given to the chapel. I wrote as directed to my unknown benefactor, thanking him for his kindness, and stated to him the circumstances I was in, as above recorded. I then called upon my friend who had promised to lend me some money, and showed him the note, and we rejoiced together. I do not to this day know who sent me the money, neither do I know anyone residing at Twickenham.

Before I close my account of the enlargement of the chapel, I would observe that as the work went on there were many Sanballats and Tobiahs (such as are mentioned by Nehemiah) looking on with indignation, and who would have hindered the work if they could, often speaking very bitterly to me, wondering that I should think of enlarging the chapel during such bad times, when so many people were short of food, and that it would be more becoming my character to go about and collect money to feed the hungry

This was said Judas-like, not that they cared so much for the poor, but from hatred to my Lord and Master and his blessed truths, such as election and predestination, that I was constantly preaching and the Lord was honouring. But I have lived to see some that were the most bitter become very friendly, in consequence of the Lord in his providential goodness placing me in circumstances to be able to befriend them in various ways; and I have proved the truth of the words of Solomon: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him." (Prov. xvi. 7.)

GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

In the former part of my memoir I have taken particular notice of having much to do with the affairs of the church of Christ meeting for divine worship in Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, London. I have also, in the Lord's dealings with me, had much to do with the church of God meeting in Gower Street chapel, Euston Square, London, as will appear from the following statement; and I have no doubt but it will be interesting to many of my readers to have a brief account of their rise and progress.

After the death of the venerable William Huntington, minister of the people meeting in Providence Chapel, Gray's Inn Lane, a committee was chosen to supply the pulpit with ministers; and in order to keep the same truths in the place that had been so ably preached by their late minister, and so much honoured of God, it was resolved that no minister be admitted into the pulpit but such as had been intimate with their late minister, and preached the same things. Mr. Locke was their principal supply, together with Mr. Chamberlain, of Leicester, Mr. Beeman, of Cranbrook, and Mr. Turner, of Sunderland. These good men's labours not being so acceptable to the people as their late minister's, there was a falling off in the attendance.

Before the death of Mr. Huntington, the Lord had opened a door for other men of God to visit the metropolis, such as Mr. Gadsby and Mr. Warburton (then of Rochdale); and soon after the death of Mr. H., Mr. Robins, of Bristol. The labours of these men of God were abundantly blessed to numbers who flocked to hear them, amongst whom were

many of Mr. Huntington's people. The result was, a chapel was taken in Conway Street, Fitzroy Square, which was crowded to excess, and often many could not gain admittance. This led to the building of Gower Street chapel, which was opened by Mr. Gadsby in 1820; and it was mutually agreed and entered in the trust deed that Mr. Gadsby and Mr. Warburton should each supply the pulpit a month in every year. Mr. Robins was an acceptable and able minister of Jesus Christ, as his sermon, "On the Benefits of the Mercy Seat,"* abundantly testifies; but in the midst of his abundant labours he was removed by the hand of death, to the grief of many who esteemed him highly in love for his work's sake. Mr. Fowler was eventually settled over the people, Mr. Gadsby and Mr. Warburton each going his month, thus giving Mr. Fowler an opportunity of visiting his friends and preaching in the country.

Mr. Fowler's labours were much honoured of God in Gower Street chapel and other places. He was truly a spiritual Barnabas, a son of consolation to the mourners in Zion. After his removal by death, the cause was carried on by supplies. It was about this time that I, with several others, began to supply the pulpit.

Mr. Fowler did not practise sprinkling nor baptism by immersion, but administered the Lord's supper to those he believed loved and feared God, and by faith discerned the Lord's body. Many of his communicants were Baptists, others advocated the sprinkling of infants, and others the baptism of the Holy Ghost only. Being thus situated, they were brought into great difficulties. Their principal and most acceptable supplies were Strict Baptists, and those who were of the same views were for a Strict Baptist church being formed; others were for Mixed Communion, which the Baptist ministers could not sanction.

During this state of things, a Mr. Blackstock was recommended to them as a supply. He, as it respects the ordinance of baptism and church communion, was like Reuben, "unstable as water, and did not excel." I knew him well, as he had been a member of Mr. Gadsby's church. I heard him preach his first sermon, and had my eyes upon him from that time until his death. For many years he was an

* This sermon was reprinted in the "Gospel Standard" in 1853.

advocate of strict communion; but going to supply at Lakenheath (the place where Mr. Locke is buried), he turned into mixed communion to accommodate two rich gentlemen, and suddenly gave up his charge of the Baptist church at Wolverhampton, where he had been for some time, and removed to Lakenheath, where the hand of the Lord went out against him, in the sudden removal by death of the two gentlemen who had promised to support him. This dispensation made him tremble, and he left the place, and in terror and dread returned to Wolverhampton, confessing his error in leaving them and changing his views; and he was received back again as a supply. Many were the confessions he made at this time to his old pastor, Mr. Gadsby, in reference to these changes; yet, after all, he acted a most contrary part, which greatly sank him in Mr. G.'s esteem, as will appear from the following statement, which I had from Mr. Gadsby himself: One morning, as they were walking together in the Regent's Park, London, Mr. Gadsby said, "Blackstock, I cannot divest myself of the impression that if the people at Gower Street give you a call to come over them as a mixed communion, you will accept it." Mr. Blackstock replied, "O my dear friend, if you only knew the grief I have felt and the sleepless nights I have passed, as my wife can testify, in consequence of leaving Wolverhampton and going to Lakenheath, where the hand of the Lord went out against me, in removing the two men who had promised to be my principal supporters, you would not think so meanly of me." "Well," Mr. G. replied, "I am sorry to be obliged to say you have put it out of my power to believe anything you say or write, either in reference to the dealings of God with your soul or circumstantial things. You have said and unsaid, repented, and done the same things again; so that my confidence in your integrity is quite gone." Shortly after this, a call was given him, and he accepted it. The consequence was that Mr. Gadsby, Mr. Warburton, myself, and others, declined having anything more to do with him.

Many who loved and feared the Lord could not sanction such proceedings; even many of those who held infant sprinkling left the place. A committee was chosen to make arrangements to establish another cause upon Strict Baptist principles, and a room was taken in Gadsby's Yard,

Tottenham Court Road. Mr. Gadsby was requested to open it; but the state of his health was such that he dared not undertake so long a journey in the winter season. Mr. Warburton was similarly circumstanced. Application was then made to me to go. I was in a great strait, and went over to Manchester to consult my old friend Mr. Gadsby upon so important a matter. He advised me to read the letter to our church, and not make any remark upon it, leaving it with the Lord and the church to settle; "for," said he, "I believe the Lord will direct your church to do that which is well-pleasing in his sight." Accordingly I read the letter, and left it with the people. They entered upon the subject in the fear of the Lord, and I could perceive there was a special desire amongst them to do that which would tend to the glory of God and the prosperity of Zion. Seeing this, I addressed them to the following effect: "My dear brethren and sisters, I am pleased to see the loving spirit you manifest, and the desire you have to be guided by the Lord in this important affair; but as yet you are at a loss what decision to come to. The word of God says, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.' (Jas. i. 5.) I therefore propose that we all kneel down before the Lord, and that our oldest deacon shall engage in prayer, to beseech the great Head of the church to give us wisdom that we may do that which is right in his sight." The Lord helped our brother to plead with him on the behalf of our London friends that were labouring to establish a church where the ordinances would be attended to, as established by Christ, the King in Zion, and practised by him and his disciples. After prayer we sat for a time in silence, I anxiously waiting to see the moving of the pillar of the cloud and fire. At length one of the deacons said, "While our brother was engaged in prayer, I saw, as in the days of Elijah, a little cloud the size of a man's hand arise out of the sea, directing us to send our minister to London to open and to support this new cause. I therefore move that he be allowed to go." This was unanimously consented to with a confidence in the minds of the people that the thing was of God. I accordingly wrote to the committee stating all that had passed; which was a great encouragement and strengthening of their hands.

At the time appointed I went, and spent four Lord's days amongst them; during which time there was a gathering together of those who were desirous of being baptized and formed into a church. Keppel Street chapel was borrowed, and I preached and baptized six or eight persons. I felt I had my Master's presence both in preaching and baptizing. It was a time long remembered; and I have often heard of the blessing of God which attended these services.

The church was not formed until Mr. Gadsby was able to go up in the spring. He being an aged and honoured servant of the Lord, the friends had a desire that he should be the planter of it.

Returning to Mr. Blackstock and the people that remained at Gower Street, suffice it to say there was a regular falling off in the attendance and support until they were unable to pay the interest, and the mortgagee sold the chapel, which then became private property; by which means £2600 that had been subscribed towards its erection was entirely sacrificed. Mr. Blackstock, and the few who clave unto him, moved into a room for a time; then he moved to Watford, where he ended his days. Nothwithstanding all these imperfections, I believe he was a man of God; and in thinking of him the words of Paul have often come to my mind: "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. ii. 5.) There were two things that Mr. B. was evidently striving for—popularity and increase of salary; but in these he was not crowned, but, on the contrary, blighted.

Mr. Arthur Triggs and his friends bought Gower Street chapel, and removed from the chapel in Waterloo Road, where Mr. T. had been very popular, expecting to be more so in Gower Street.

Whilst these changes were taking place, the Lord was blessing the truth to the souls of the people who had left Gower Street and met in Tottenham Court Road. The place soon became too small for them, and they took a chapel in Eden Street, Hampstead Road, were they continued for several years. This place also becoming too small to hold the people, a great desire was manifested among them for a larger chapel, and it was agreed that they should look out for ground to build one. At this crisis I went to supply them, and entreated them to be still a little

longer, as I had an impression on my mind that the Lord would open a way for them to return to Gower Street chapel. My practice is, and has long been, to have a walk before I take my breakfast. In one of these walks I passed Gower Street chapel, and standing on the opposite side of the road looking at it, the Lord poured down into my soul such a spirit of grace and supplication that I wrestled with the Lord, and besought his divine Majesty to make bare his arm on the behalf of the people who built it, but had been obliged to leave for truth and conscience sake, as before related. Before I left off speaking in mental prayer, I had a confidence given me that my desire would be granted, according to his promise: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and hear their cry." (Ps. cxlv. 19). I mentioned this to the people, and again exhorted them to wait and watch the hand of the Lord.

Having had a little previous acquaintance with Mr. Triggs, I felt inclined to call upon him, and found him in a very unsettled state of mind in reference to his continuing at Gower Street, which confirmed my mind that the Lord would answer my prayer, and which indeed he did much sooner than I expected; for I had not been long at home before I received information that the chapel was bought, and was to undergo a thorough repair; and when finished I was requested to reopen it. The friends entered into a subscription towards raising the money to pay for it, and the Lord inclined the heart of one who possessed the means, not only to give a liberal sum, but to lend £600 without any interest until the church was able to pay him back the principal. And it is with pleasure I record that the Lord has so blessed and prospered them, both spiritually and temporally, that the debt is all paid off and the chapel free.

"Wonders of grace to God belong,
Repeat his mercies in your song."

The chapel was reopened and the friends returned to their former home on Lord's day, Jan. 7th, 1855. There were large congregations, and I believe the Lord was in our midst. My morning text was Ps. cxxvi. 3: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad;" and I was led to mention many of the things before narrated, which were listened to with great pleasure and attention.

In the afternoon, dear Mr. Cowper, of the Dicker, Sussex, preached. My evening's text was Rev. xix. 6: "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Both sermons were taken down and printed.

The above concludes the narrative by Mr. Kershaw.

In the order of time will be added an account of Mr. K.'s visit to Edinburgh through the instrumentality of his esteemed friend Lady Lucy Smith, of Wilford, of which he wrote an account immediately after his return home.

DEATH OF MRS. KERSHAW.

The first thing which can be remembered as worthy of notice in the attempt to add a few things to what has been written, is the decease of the early companion of Mr. Kershaw's joys and sorrows, which the writer is assured cannot be done better than by copying the account given of her in the book appointed by the church to record the death of its members:

"Margaret Kershaw, the wife of our minister, was removed from us by the hand of death on the 25th of March, 1850. She was one of the nine that founded the church in 1809. She was a true Christian, and a mother in Israel, well established in the doctrines of grace, a woman of peace, always striving for the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. She abhorred tale-bearing, and going from house to house to sow the seeds of strife and contention, being an ensample to the flock in every good word and work. Hannah Lord (before mentioned) and she were great friends in the things of God, and walked together in the fear of the Lord. She was a help-meet to her husband, both in things temporal and spiritual. They waded through many family bereavements, which very much shook her constitution. Her last illness was long and tedious, she being closely confined to her bed for eighteen weeks of a dropsy; but she was enabled to bear her affliction with great patience, and was never heard to murmur or repine. Her husband often read hymns and the word of God to her, and prayed with her; which was made a great comfort to her soul. She wished nothing to be said about her by way of a funeral sermon, as

she felt not worthy to be named; but wished to be laid aside as quietly as possible; which request was attended to."

MR. KERSHAW'S SECOND MARRIAGE.

On the 12th of May, 1851, Mr. Kershaw became my beloved and esteemed husband. We had known each other for many years, as I heard him preach his first sermon in London, on a Lord's day, at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, and as I resided in the family of Mr. Joshua Pedley, of Forest Gate, West Ham, Essex, with whom he became intimately acquainted, the first time of his going to London. There sprang up a friendship between us, which was a link in the chain of providence to bring me to Rochdale. We were married at the Baptist chapel, Bow, Middlesex, in the presence of many of the friends belonging to Zoar Chapel, who wished us every needful blessing in the name of the Lord. We always felt our union to be a happy one, and we were favoured with as much if not more happiness than usually falls to the lot of poor pilgrims in this world of sin and sorrow.

Through grace, we were of one heart and soul in the truths of the gospel, the things that concern the church of God, the Sabbath school, and in visiting the sick and afflicted. Also in visiting amongst the flock, and spending the evening in conversing on the things of God and his dealings with us, both in providence and grace; and my dear husband being favoured with a most retentive memory, often used to relate to our intense gratification many things respecting William Gadsby, of Manchester, William Nunn, of Manchester, John Hurst, of Bacup, Charles Bamford, of Pole Moor, William Crabtree, of Bradford, and many other ministers, who have long since gone home to their eternal rest, and ceased from their labours. But death has severed the earthly tie, and I am left behind to mourn the loss of a tender, loving husband, earthly guide, and counsellor.

THE LATE MR. PHILPOT.

As is well known, dear Mr. J. C. Philpot and Mr. Kershaw were not long between each other in going in to partake of the inheritance given them by free grace and

everlasting love. Soon after the decease of my dear husband, I received a letter of sympathy from dear Mrs. Philpot. I hope she will pardon my publishing in these memorials an extract from the same, as the reading of it left a sweet savour upon my troubled spirit:

"The Lord has seen fit in his all-wise providence to remove from us our dearest earthly tie; but though we both so deeply mourn their absence from the flesh, we have the consolation of knowing they are now joining in the happy song of sinners saved by grace, and adoring that Triune Jehovah whom they loved and followed on earth, and whom they delighted to serve. Their memory will live long in the hearts of the dear family of God, and you and I should think ourselves favoured to have been the near and dear companions of the Lord's favoured ministers of his word and doctrine."

The sentiments contained in this extract are sweet and solemn truths. May they be deeply impressed upon each of our minds, and their example who are taken from us be like Abel's, who, though dead, yet speaketh.

A NEW SCHOOL-ROOM.

For several years the schools where the children assembled on the Sabbath day had become too small, and some of the elder classes had to go into the chapel to be taught. A new school was, therefore, much wanted. The chief obstacle to the building of one was the covering over of several graves. This had to be done when the chapel was enlarged, and caused a great deal of unpleasantness; but an order coming from the Government for the providing of a cemetery for Rochdale, and the closing of all graveyards in the borough when the cemetery was ready for interments, the difficulty was partly removed. The building of a new school-room was commenced in April, 1855, was completed by the autumn of the same year, and cost £800, £600 of which was subscribed at the time it was opened. On Lord's day, October 28th, three sermons were preached in the chapel for the opening of the school, those in the morning and evening by Mr. Kershaw, and that in the afternoon by Mr. Michael Horbury, of Blackburn. The text in the morning was Ps. cxxxiii. 3; in the evening, Ps. cxxvi. 3. Collections were made for the school, and they amounted to £40. Many prayers have been offered up to the Lord for the prosperity of the school, and we believe they have been

heard and answered. The remaining debt has long been paid off. The scholars increased, and we have had tokens that the instructions given have been blessed, not only to the moral benefit of the children, but that the Holy Spirit has sealed the word home to the consciences of young persons who are now members of the church. Like the late Mr. Gadsby, my dear husband took a great interest in everything connected with the Sabbath school, and living so near to it he went in every Sabbath morning (when at home) a little before nine o'clock, and opened the school with singing and prayer, and often gave a word of exhortation, reproof, or encouragement, as he saw was needed. After which he went to every class, both of males and females, and shook hands with the teachers, if found at their post. He took great pleasure in being present at the annual tea meetings, also would head the procession on the Friday in Whit-week, when the scholars are entertained in a gentleman's garden with refreshments, and a field provided for them to play in. This gentleman, who has once been mayor of Rochdale, attended our Sabbath school when a boy, and is not ashamed to own it. Indeed, he gives addresses to the scholars, and refers to it, and by his example endeavours to stimulate the young to industry and perseverance in the path of virtue.

On Whit-Friday, May 21st, 1869, Mr. K. was very poorly, and could not take his usual post; but he would have a cab and follow the children to the gardens. All were sorry to see his altered appearance.

THE ROCHDALE CEMETERY.

The writer having mentioned the Rochdale cemetery in connexion with our new school, and as it now contains all that is mortal of her dear husband and of many of the friends who belonged to Hope Chapel, both old and young, it is thought that a few words respecting it will be interesting to the reader.

In Genesis xxiii. we have left upon record an account of Abraham purchasing the cave of Machpelah for a burying-place, the price he gave for it, whom he bought it of, and that "the field, and the cave that was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in the borders round about,

were made sure unto Abraham for the possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth."

Jacob on his dying bed charged his sons, and said unto them, "I am about to be gathered unto my people. Bury me with my fathers," &c. See to the end of the chapter, Gen. xlix.

Who is there that has been bereaved of a beloved relative or friend that can read this touching narrative without being affected?

Joseph, when he was near the end of his pilgrimage, charged the children of Israel not to leave his bones in Egypt, and Moses faithfully attended to his request. (See Exod. xiii. 19.) And when settled in the land of Canaan, what care was manifested in placing them in their last resting-place. (See Josh. xxiv. 32.)

The Rochdale cemetery was opened on Saturday, April 28th, 1855, and contains about thirteen statute acres; and I have been informed that the purchase of the land and preparing it cost £12,000. On the day of the opening, the authorities of the town, most of the ministers, and the children of the various Sabbath schools, the fire-brigade and other bodies, walked in procession to the cemetery. The Bishop of Manchester was considered to have consecrated the Church of England side, and laid the foundation of the Episcopal chapel. The Dissenters sang part of the 100th psalm, Dr. Watts; also the 66th and 55th hymns, Second Book; and offered up prayer to God. The chief constable* laid the foundation-stone of the Dissenters' chapel, the bishop coming to our side to witness it, which was considered by some to be very kind and condescending of him.

It was a solemn and impressive sight to see the many thousands who stood on each side of the cemetery, all doomed ere long to return to dust; and many are now lying there; for at the time of Mr. Kershaw's interment 13,973 had been consigned to the tomb in the above place.

LADY LUCY SMITH.—ANOTHER VISIT TO SCOTLAND.

In the year 1856, while in London, supplying at Gower Street chapel, Mr. Kershaw became acquainted with Lady

* Rochdale was not then a corporate town; so we had no mayor.

Lucy Smith and her husband. An account of this I am happy to inform the reader is recorded by himself.

Having for more than twenty years heard a great deal of Lady Lucy Smith, of Wilford House, near Nottingham, granddaughter of the venerable John Thornton, of Clapham, London,* of which gentleman I had read much, in the "Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon," the "Memoir of John Newton," and the "Life and Letters of John Berridge," and that she was like-minded with him in supporting the cause of God and truth and liberality to the poor, I felt a desire to become acquainted with her; and this, in the providence of God, was brought about in the following manner: I was supplying at Gower Street chapel, London, in September, 1856, when a collection was made to reduce the debt on the chapel. On going into the vestry after the evening service, I found a letter directed to me; the contents of which were as follows:

"An unworthy friend sends the enclosed five pounds towards the debt of Gower Street chapel. Lady Lucy Smith would esteem it a favour to see Mr. Kershaw at the Great Northern Hotel to-morrow morning, at any time from ten to one o'clock."

I accordingly went and saw Lady Lucy. She told me that, on the recommendation of her son, who had heard me the Lord's day before when I was preaching from Phil. i. 21: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (and from which I preached three sermons), she was induced to come and hear. She said when I began to speak she felt I spoke from the feelings of my own soul, and that the word came with power into her heart; and she could assure me that her dear husband and she had far more conversation upon that "gain" of which I had been speaking than of their worldly possessions. We had an hour's very profitable conversation upon the gracious dealings of God with our souls and the affairs of Zion.

Soon after this interview, she wrote to our church at Rochdale, in 1856, requesting them to allow me to go and preach at Nottingham and Wilford; which request our

* For more interesting particulars of this amiable and benevolent lady, by Mr. Philpot, see the "Gospel Standard" for March, 1866. Mr. Kershaw frequently said, "she was the most benevolent lady he ever met with, for she seemed to live entirely for the good of others." —L. K.

people granted. On one occasion, when supplying at Nottingham, I went over to Stamford to supply for dear Mr. Philpot, who was poorly. In conversation with him, he said, "I am glad you have been to Wilford. I have been there several times, and there is no place I go to where I hear as much good spiritual conversation at mealtimes as I do at Wilford House." I replied, "I can say the same, with an addition to what you have said." He inquired what it was. I replied, "I go to no house where I hear as little backbiting and speaking evil of absent friends." The truth of this he confirmed. Let this be an example to us all, who profess godliness, and especially those who are in the habit of entertaining God's ministers. It is desirable that our conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers. How painful when the people of God have itching ears to hear some evil report to talk about. As Paul says, "My brethren, these things ought not to be."

On one occasion, in October, 1861, when I went to Nottingham, Lady Lucy told me they had just returned from Scotland, and had a favour to ask of me, and hoped I should not deny them, adding, "Whilst we have been amongst our relatives and friends in Edinburgh, and hearing different ministers who preach a Yea and Nay gospel, it has been laid upon our minds to send you amongst them, to preach the gospel in the plain unadorned language of God's Word, as it has been made manifest in your own soul, under the anointing of the blessed Spirit. In that city we believe there are many gracious souls, who would be glad to hear a sound experimental minister, who preaches the truth in love under the anointing of the Holy Spirit." She added that they had made arrangements for me to preach in St. Luke's church, and in the Great Hall of the College of the Free Church of Scotland, and that, if I thought fit, I might preach in the chapel and pulpit in which John Knox preached; also that they would bear all expenses. When I heard all her ladyship had to say, I replied, "I cannot deny you; for, while you have been speaking, the following words have come with power to my mind: 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.'" (Rev. iii. 8.) We kneeled down together and besought the Lord that his blessing and presence might go with me.

The thing was accordingly arranged, and I left home on November 6th, arrived at Edinburgh the same night, and went to comfortable lodgings provided for me by the Lady Provost of Edinburgh, niece of Lady Lucy Smith.

I preached the following night in St. Luke's church from Acts xxvii. 23: "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve;" and again on the Lord's day morning from Ps. iii. 8: "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy people." After the morning service, the elders, whom we call deacons, came into the vestry and said the word had been much blessed to their souls, and to many others; and as their minister was poorly and in bed, it was their desire that I should not only preach in the afternoon, but on the following Thursday and next Lord's day. I preached again in the afternoon, from the latter part of the morning's text: "Thy blessing is upon thy people."

In the evening, I was taken to the great College Hall and introduced to the ministers, who usually attend there on a Sabbath evening to give a word of exhortation to the people. When the congregation stood up to sing, it was a very imposing and affecting sight. It was arranged that I should deliver the second address. I listened attentively to the first discourse, and do not recollect ever hearing the "trumpet give a more uncertain sound." I thought of what Lady Lucy had said to me of what she felt when she saw so many people gathered together to hear such a "Yea and Nay gospel," which, as Paul says, "is not another" (Gal. i. 7), but a perversion of the true gospel; and that it was in that place, in the midst of such an assembly, the Lord laid it upon her mind to endeavour to open a door for me to preach faithfully amongst them the pure truth of God, which lays the sinner low in the dust and upon the dunghill of self-abasement as nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity, and exalts the dear Redeemer, as "All and in All" in the salvation of his chosen people, which is all of grace, "to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;" and to insist upon the Person and work of God the Holy Ghost, in the beginning, carrying on, and completing of the good work of grace in the souls of his people, and landing every elect vessel of mercy safe in glory. My soul went up to the Lord in earnest fervent prayer to deliver

me from "the fear of man, which bringeth a snare," and that he would enable me to speak his word faithfully; "for what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" (Jer. xxiii. 28.)

As the people were singing the hymn after the first discourse, I sat trembling, feeling the solemn and important position I was in the providence of God placed in. The singing being ended, "the minister from England" was called upon to address the people. As I arose to take my standing, all fear and trembling vanished like the mist before the rising sun. In all my fifty years' ministry, I never remember opening my mouth with more freedom and enlargedness of heart. I felt my Master's presence with me, and his power upon me. As soon as I began to speak, I saw a solemn effect was produced through the place. The ministers and people who sat near me looked at me and one another with surprise. I told them that the subject my Lord and Master had laid upon my mind, in answer to many prayers, was a very solemn and important one, viz., the former part of the third chapter of the Gospel according to John, the conversation which took place between our Lord Jesus Christ and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews and a master of Israel, concerning the New Birth, without which our Lord solemnly declares that we can neither see nor enter into the kingdom of God. I then called their attention to the following things: First, the necessity of being born again. Secondly, the power and means by which this great work is accomplished. Thirdly, the scriptural evidences of a poor sinner being "born again." In this discourse I dwelt more particularly upon the power by which the great change is effected; and to illustrate it, took notice of our Lord's definition of the subject (John i. 13): "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," dwelling distinctly upon the three *negatives*, and solemnly insisting on and maintaining the *positive* declaration: "But of God."

The time being gone, and the strength of my body exhausted, I told them I was sorry I could not take up the latter part of the subject—the scriptural evidences of being born again, that we might examine ourselves whether or not we were regenerated and made new creatures in Christ

Jesus, old things having passed away, and all things having become new. (2 Cor. v. 17.) It was at once agreed that I should take up the subject next Lord's day evening; and the gentleman who presided over the meeting announced it. I was much encouraged at seeing the solemn attention which was paid to the word, and thankful to the Lord for opening my heart and mouth to preach his truth faithfully, and to prove every sentiment advanced from the word of God, which is sound speech which cannot be condemned.

Before the last hymn was sung, the minister that spoke before me wished to make a few more remarks. From his manner I saw that he was much confused and embarrassed, the wings of his zeal in the delivery of his previous discourse having been clipped by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He spoke as follows: "I am afraid, from the discourse you have been hearing, that many of you will say, 'As being born again is the work of God, and at the Lord's time all his people must be born again, it is of no use our trying to do the Lord's work.' I grant that the truths we have heard cannot be overthrown by the word of God; but as we have not a day nor an hour to call our own, we are called upon to repent, to turn to God, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or we cannot be saved." But it was evidently seen that the Yea and Amen Gospel of Jesus Christ that he had been hearing lay so heavily upon him, that he could not proceed to enjoin upon the sinner that which had been proved from Scripture to be the prerogative of the Holy Ghost, and that Christ is the giver of repentance and faith to his people. (John vi. 63; Acts v. 31; Eph. ii. 8.)

At the close of the service, an elderly man, who had presided over the meeting, took hold of my hand and said, "Ah, my friend! These truths in the ministration of them are greatly wanted in this city." As I was coming out of the hall, another person took hold of me and said, "The Lord has been with you. If you are spared to come again next Lord's day evening, you will see this hall, which holds more than one thousand five hundred people, overflowed."

As far as I had opportunity, I was enabled to give myself unto prayer. Two portions of the word of God were

a great comfort and support to my mind, viz., I. John v. 14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us, and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." I was led to examine whether my petitions were according to the will of God; and I found that we were mutually agreed. First, his will is his own honour and glory in the salvation of his people; and to this, by grace, my soul responded. Secondly, it was his will that his truth should be faithfully preached for the comfort of his people; and this my soul was beseeching him to enable me to do. Thirdly, his will is that all his people should be effectually called by grace out of nature's darkness into his marvellous light; and my response to this was, that the Lord would work by me, "confirming the word with signs following." Fourthly, his will is that his people, and especially his ministers, should live as becomes the gospel of Christ. As these things were what I was petitioning for, I felt a confidence wrought in me that they would be granted me.

Again. Feeling a great need of the Holy Spirit's anointing, life, light, savour and power in preaching the word of life, the following words were much upon my mind, and I daily pleaded them before the Lord: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

The following Sabbath evening I went up the hill to the College Hall with the above precious promises upon my mind, by faith resting upon them, as the people did upon the words of Hezekiah (II. Chron. xxxii. 8): "But with us is the Lord our God to help us, and fight our battles." I felt that I was in the hand of Hezekiah's God, and did not rest on an arm of flesh, but on him who hath said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I entered the vestry, or ante-room, and found no one there. Shortly afterwards, a gentleman came and inquired if I was Mr. Kershaw, from Rochdale; and he told me that he was well acquainted with one of the oldest families in that town, which I well knew to be a family of great wealth as it respects this world. When the person who is the leader of these Sabbath evening services came

in, I found that the above gentleman and myself were to be the speakers on that evening. He was requested to speak first, but he declined, saying that I had a very important subject to bring before the people, and as many were coming to hear, I should have time to go through it. We entered the hall, and service commenced with singing and prayer. The second hymn is one of my particular favourites: "Rock of Ages," &c.

I enjoyed the singing of it; and when I commenced, I told them the hymn they had been singing contained the marrow and glory of the gospel, both in doctrine and experience, and repeated several parts of it with sweet savour upon my spirit, especially the last verse:

"While I draw this fleeting breath," &c.

and then proceeded to my subject, viz., "The scriptural evidences of being born again." I enjoyed a humble, solemn mind, and great liberty in speaking; and great attention was paid to the word.

I have no doubt some of my readers who are longing for the Holy Spirit to bear witness with their spirits that they are born of God would be glad to hear the evidences thereof brought forward from the Scriptures; but this would enlarge the book, and a sermon I preached at Manchester on this subject now being before the churches in a second edition, I forbear to enlarge.

A few verses having been sung, the gentleman arose to give the second address. He began by informing us that he had recently been in London, and while there had seen the largest assemblage of people he ever saw at one time, upon the banks of the river Thames, to see a man walk across the river upon a rope, which he accomplished to the astonishment of the assembled thousands; and he then exclaimed, with a powerful voice, "We have all to cross the river of death. The man had passed over the river Thames by a rope made with human hands; but neither men nor angels could make a rope or bridge that would carry us safe over the Jordan of death into the spiritual Canaan above." He then showed from the word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit the impossibility of a sinner being justified by the works of the law, or entering heaven upon the ground of his own righteousness; and from John xiv. 6 he preached Jesus, who hath said, "I am

the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Jesus is the new and living way to eternal glory, and all who are born and taught of God are led to see and feel their need of Jesus as their Saviour; as our Lord said to Nicodemus, in reference to the new birth of which we have been hearing, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" From these words he preached Christ most blessedly, and salvation finished, all of grace, to the joy and rejoicing of my heart, confirming and establishing the truths the Lord had enabled me to deliver in my two discourses.

When the service was over, the gentleman very cordially shook hands with me, and said, "Had I known of your being here, and heard your first discourse, I would have invited you to my house, and I am sorry you are leaving in the morning." I made some inquiry about this gentleman, and was told he was a rich man and a lover of the truth, and that the young men in the college who loved a free-grace gospel had access to his house for religious conversation; also that he sometimes preached himself.

On the Wednesday evening I preached in what is called Whitefield's chapel, from Matt. xxv. 10: "And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut." This chapel stands in a low part of the town. We had a goodly number of the common people, "who heard the word gladly." I felt a great desire to preach in the pulpit once occupied by John Knox, and the way was being made for me to do so; but the friends told me that since his days the new town had risen up, that his chapel stood in an outside place, and that I should not have so many hearers as in the new town; and I was advised to give up preaching there.

On the Thursday evening I preached again at St. Luke's, from John vi. 37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." I was told that this sermon was as marrow and fatness to many, and I felt it good to my own soul while preaching.

On the following Lord's day I preached my last sermon in St. Luke's from Deut. xxxiii. 3: "Yea, he loved the

people. All his saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet. Every one shall receive of thy words." Although a heavy snow had fallen, and it was slippery, we had a good and attentive congregation, and I had my Master's presence with me in dispensing his truth. I had many persons call upon me at my lodgings, two or three of whom I will name. One of the elders of St. Luke's, with his wife, called the first Monday. After a few observations on general things, he said to his wife, "It is on your account we are come to see the minister. Tell him your errand." She said, "Sir, I was much blessed under your preaching yesterday. I want you to come and dine with us on Wednesday, and meet several friends who, like myself, have been blessed under your ministry, and want to have some spiritual conversation with you. I felt much under that part of your sermon where you insisted so firmly and solemnly that 'every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God;' and that all those whose mouths were not stopped in this life would be stopped at the judgment of the great day. When you described what it was to have our mouths stopped by the law being brought home by the Holy Spirit into the conscience, and the sentence of condemnation felt, and the sinner brought to pronounce the Lord just if he sent his soul to hell, it entered into my heart and soul in such a manner as I never felt it before; and I do not recollect ever hearing any minister bringing it forward in the like solemn manner, except my old minister that I used to hear in the Highlands, in the Gaelic language. The finished salvation you were enabled to preach, 'all of grace,' from first to last, is the joy of my heart. The everlasting electing love of God the Father as the fountain, finished by Christ on the cross, revealed to the poor sinner's soul by the Holy Ghost, met my case so blessedly that I felt quite a revival in my soul's feelings." According to her request, I went on the following Wednesday, and met several at dinner, and others came afterwards to tea; so we were a goodly company, engaged in sweet savoury conversation upon the Lord's gracious dealings with his people.

At a quarter to seven o'clock, a cab came to take me to preach at Whitefield's chapel. The friends appeared very sorry that I had to leave them, as it broke up one of the

most interesting conversations I had while in that city. Another of my visitors was old Dr. Duncan (the professor of languages at the College of the Free Church of Scotland), and who I was told by one of the ministers understood fourteen languages, and that there was only one in the city who surpassed him in learning. He told me he had heard me preach three sermons, and he quite agreed with me in every statement I had made, both in doctrine, experience, and practice save one, and that I had not fully entered upon, viz., "the extent of the call of the gospel." He candidly told me that his human learning had for years past been a great hindrance to his coming to a saving knowledge of the truth, and he had proved the truth of Paul's words, that the world by wisdom know not God; and, referring me to 1 Cor. i. 20-22, said he was for a long time like a wandering star, or a ship at sea without a compass, ready to settle in every ism—sometimes Arianism or Socinianism; and sometimes his mind was bordering upon infidelity. He declared himself much ashamed of many of his theological productions. When it pleased the Lord to work in his soul by the power of the Spirit, he was for a long time in a distressed state, not knowing what to do to get peace and comfort. In the providence of God, one of his ministering servants was sent to Edinburgh, one of equal learning with himself, and he, hearing of the unsettled state of his mind, sought an interview with him, and told him that he had been similarly exercised, and laboured under the same difficulties, but never found any rest or peace in his soul until he was constrained to lay aside all his human attainments; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Also the apostle says in another place, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise;" and our Lord said, "We must receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child;" and Peter again, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word." This conversation was made a great blessing to my friend. He said, "It was a word in season to me, and sealed home in my heart by the Holy Spirit. I was enabled to go to the feet of Jesus as a little child, and beg him to teach me, as I was a poor,

ignorant sinner, by his Spirit and his Word. The Lord graciously heard my prayer, and, after showing me that I could not be justified by my own doings, revealed himself unto me as my Saviour and Redeemer; and I can say with the apostle Paul, I received it not of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." We spoke of Scott's "Force of Truth," in which the author confessed he had been priding himself on his human attainments, opposing the doctrines of grace and despising his neighbour, that dear man of God John Newton, who eventually was made a blessing to him. Also of John Berridge, who preached some years before the Lord stripped him and caused him to flee to Jesus for refuge. The conversation I had with this man I hope never to forget.

Before we parted, another minister came in, and we were invited by Dr. Duncan to go to his house the next day, which we consented to do; but he was taken sick, and could not entertain us; so I saw him no more.

In the Memoir of Samuel Medley, by his daughter, she thus speaks of her grandfather, Mr. Guy Medley: "He was a scholar, understanding and conversing in nine languages, but was of the meek and teachable spirit of a child in the school of Christ, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, counting all his talents and acquirements but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. 'Knowledge,' he would say, 'only makes a man the greater fool if it does not discover to him his own ignorance, folly, and weakness, and assist him in promoting the glory of God and the good of his fellow-creatures.'"

Here I feel disposed to insert a paragraph from a sermon preached before the University of Oxford, by Mr. Bulteel, Feb. 6th, 1831. Text, 1 Cor. ii. 12, p. 22:

"But if it be asked how do we arrive at this most excellent and comfortable knowledge, the words of the text plainly answer: 'We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' By the spirit of the world is here particularly meant worldly wisdom, which in the preceding chapter he has shown to be utterly unprofitable in order to teach us the deep things of God. Worldly wisdom is very well in its place, but the man that carries his worldly wisdom to the word of God, in order thereby to get spiritual understanding, is making as fruitless and clumsy an attempt as if he should take the key of the college gates to unlock his cabinet of jewels. Such a man is a fool, and knows nothing yet as he ought to know. We do well, therefore, at

the very outset, in acting as the magicians did, burning all our books of curious arts, let them be as costly as they may; for in matters of salvation they do no more than bewitch the people and deceive ourselves."

Whilst I was in Edinburgh, I clearly saw the truth of the above verified. I was taken on a Friday afternoon, at three o'clock, to a prayer-meeting held in a gentleman's house, and a goodly number assembled. They had Acts iii. 19: "When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," for their mutual consideration, and all they could say upon it was by criticism,—how it read in the Greek and Hebrew, what was the grammatical bearing of the words; all which to me was like taking the key of the college gates, &c. I was soon convinced that they had not, like Peter who spoke the words, been much with Jesus. Not a word was said about the sweet love of Jesus being shed abroad in the heart, nor of the blood of sprinkling applied to the conscience, nor of the precious promises being applied to the heart by the heavenly Comforter; not a word of being refreshed by communion with the Lord at a throne of grace, nor under the ministry of the word or the ordinances of the Lord's house. It was like a great deal of the preaching of the present day, when a text is taken and played with like a child playing with an orange which it is not able to open nor taste the sweetness thereof. I felt as if I should have liked to have preached a sermon upon it, but was only allowed time for a few words. I perceived, from the little I did say, that I was a barbarian unto them. (1 Cor. xiv. 11.)

One morning, as I was walking on the footpath, a cabman drew up by me and said, "You are Mr. Kershaw. I will take you wherever you wish to go to." I told him I was going up to the Castle, which the Lord Provost had given me an order to see over, with Queen Mary's room, the crown of Scotland, &c. He opened the cab door and bade me get in. I inquired what was his fare. He replied, "Nothing. You are the Lord's servant, and the cab is your Lord and Master's, and I will take you wherever you wish, not only to-day, but any day as long as you are in Edinburgh." I got in, and he drove off. As it is a heavy pull at the Castle Hill, my conscience told me that I should give the poor man a shilling at least for his trouble; and when I alighted

I offered the same to him. He refused to take it, saying, "I heard you preach at St. Luke's, and my soul was blessed under the word; so that I am glad of the opportunity of speaking to you, and bringing you here." I thanked him for his kindness, and told him I was glad to see a person in his situation with so good a horse and cab; also that while I had been in Edinburgh a person from London had spoken to me in the vestry of St. Luke's, informing me that he had often heard me in London, and was come to Edinburgh as a missionary among the cabmen. I inquired if he knew him. He replied, "O yes. He is a good, gracious man, and very useful amongst us cabmen. We hold a weekly prayer-meeting at my house, and he always attends, and we should be glad to see you amongst us." I asked his name, which he told me was Jackson. On inquiring as to his character, I found he was a man of good report, and could well afford to render me the assistance he had so cheerfully offered.

As I walked down the hill from the Castle, a person came out of a house and would have me to call. I found him and his wife very kind, and they pressed me to stay and dine with them, that we might have some conversation upon the truths he had heard me deliver in that city. I told him I should have been glad to have complied with their request if I had not been previously engaged. He told me he would walk with me and show me something that would please me. He took me into a large room, well fitted up with tables and chairs, and an excellent library of books, for the use of the soldiers who are garrisoned at the Castle. I was pleased to see so many of the soldiers availing themselves of the privilege.

Another person came to see me several times, bringing with him a Yorkshireman who had known me many years. He was a Bible agent, and gave me a copy of the New Testament and the Psalms in the Scotch version. He preached occasionally. From these two men I learned much of the state of religion in that city, and I am convinced, from what they said and my own observations, that there is much more of the form of godliness than of the life and power of God in the soul; but, though such is the case, I am happy to be able to say that I found some that know the plague of their heart, who sigh, groan, and mourn because of indwell-

ing sin, and who hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness; and where these things are wanting, religion is only in form, not in power.

There was one circumstance occurred whilst I was in Edinburgh which caused me much grief; yet the Lord mingled it with joy. The Lord Provost kindly invited me to dine with him, and said that I should be taken in his carriage down to the sea-side, and to some of the principal streets and places in Edinburgh; and that I might have the better view, the carriage was open. The sister of the Lady Provost accompanied me, with two of the children. This lady I had previously known at Wilford, and I am happy to say that during our ride we had more conversation on the things of God than on the things which surrounded us. The coachman's instructions were, when we left the sea to bring us by the way of the queen's drive and Holyrood Palace, that I might see John Knox's chapel. As the shades of evening came on, it was exceedingly cold, and the lady who accompanied me took such a severe cold that she was confined to her bed for many weeks, which deprived me of her company and conversation during the rest of my stay. I have recently seen her at Wilford; when she told me that she had enjoyed so much of the blessing and presence of the Lord during the affliction that she would not have been without the bitters because of the sweets.

Before I left Edinburgh, one of my members from Rochdale, a Scotchman by birth, having occasion to visit Glasgow in his business, came to me on the Friday, and heard me on the Sabbath. On Monday, I accompanied him to Glasgow, and found it a much larger and handsomer city than I had anticipated. I went with my friend to several places of interest; amongst them to the Necropolis, where a handsome monument is erected to the memory of Scotland's great and undaunted Reformer, John Knox, he of whom Mary, Queen of Scots, declared she "feared his prayers more than an army of soldiers." The monument is a noble piece of workmanship, with a full-length figure of the Reformer, the sight of which caused a thrilling sensation to go through me. On the front, right side, and back, there is an inscription; and although not belonging to my history, I feel disposed to give part of it a place in my

narrative, believing it will be interesting to the lovers of gospel truth and national liberty.

FRONT.

"To testify gratitude for inestimable services in the cause of Religion, Education, and Civil Liberty;

"To awaken admiration of that Integrity, Disinterestedness, and Courage which stood unshaken in the midst of trials and in the maintenance of the highest objects;

"Finally, to cherish unceasing reverence for the principles and blessings of that great Reformation by the influence of which our country, through the midst of difficulties, has risen to honour, prosperity, and happiness;

"This monument is erected by voluntary contributions,

"TO THE MEMORY OF
"JOHN KNOX,

"The chief instrument, under God, of the Reformation of Scotland,
"On the 22nd day of September, 1825.

"He died, rejoicing in the Faith of the Gospel, at Edinburgh, on the 24th of November, A.D., 1572, in the 67th year of his age."

PART OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE RIGHT SIDE.

"In 1547, and in the city where his friend George Wishart had suffered, John Knox, surrounded with dangers, first preached the doctrine of the Reformation. In 1559, on the 24th of August, the Parliament of Scotland adopted the confession of faith presented by the reformed ministers, and declared Popery to be no longer the religion of this kingdom.

"When laid in the grave, the Regent said, 'There lieth he who never feared the face of man, who was often threatened with dag and dagger, yet hath ended his days in peace and honour.'"

I returned home, much pleased with my visit to Scotland, having the answer of a good conscience, thanking the Lord that he kept me faithful to the truth, and praying that the word spoken by a poor unworthy worm might be, by the power of the Holy Ghost, like seed sown in good ground, bringing forth fruit to the glory of God.

Here again ends the narrative by Mr. Kershaw.

THE COTTON FAMINE.

WE read in 1 Chron. xxix. 30 of a record being made respecting David "and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries;" and we daily live to prove that in many things one event happeneth to all,—the family of God and the people of the world. Many of the readers of these memorials will

remember the "Cotton Famine;" a most distressing time for this country, especially for the counties of Lancashire and Derbyshire, and part of Yorkshire and Cheshire; but it was overruled for good, to make manifest the Lord's care over his creatures, in sustaining them in the most trying dispensations, and inclining the hearts of those that were able to assist during the great calamity. It is not in my power to relate the great amount of benevolence displayed in the sending of money and wearing apparel to the various ministers of all denominations, and the committees for relief in the different towns and villages. I must confine myself to what came more immediately under our own jurisdiction.

I believe there has always been a sick and poor fund belonging to Hope Chapel; and as the disbursements were generally as great as the receipts, there was seldom much in hand; but in the latter end of the year 1860 and the beginning of 1861 it was considerably augmented by a donation of £10 from a gentleman now residing at Leamington, £5 from Mr. J. Gadsby, after a very successful lecture at Rochdale, and then £20 from dear Mr. Tiptaft. This Mr. Kershaw was reluctant to receive, fearing his well-known benevolent spirit was doing too much; but the reasons he assigned, and his urgent wish for the Rochdale sick and poor to partake of it, relieved my husband's scruples, and it was added to the stock in hand. We thought we were well supplied, and thanked God for the same; and although we had some forebodings of trouble arising from the contention between the Northern and Southern States of America, we did not anticipate such a great and continued season of difficulty and privation to the employed and perplexity to many of the employers.

It is recorded by the prophet Nahum (i. 7): "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." Bless his holy name, we did at this season prove the truth of the prophet's declaration. As the distress increased, our fund increased also. Money was sent from most of the causes where Mr. Kershaw had supplied, and several others where he had not been. Foremost among the latter were the people at Cambridge who sit under the ministry of Mr. Marks; Mr. W. Fremlin, of Foot's Cray, Kent; and the friends at Old Brentford, Middlesex, by Mr. A. B. Voysey. Sums of money were

sent from private persons, some of whom my dear husband was acquainted with; some he did not know, nor even the places were they lived. Their letters often read thus: "Dear Servant of the Lord,—I heard you preach at such a place, and from such a text. The word was made a blessing to my soul, and I send you the enclosed to help your poor friends in this time of need." This was a twofold blessing to my dear husband, in bringing before his notice the blessing of the Lord on the word of truth dispensed by his unworthy servant and assistance for the poor.

It often affected us to tears when we received money from the little causes scattered up and down, who are little flocks in every sense of the word, and reminded us of the widow's mite so acceptable in the eyes of our dear Lord. See the beginning of the 21st chapter of Luke's Gospel. In this way and manner we received from friends and sources not belonging to Hope Chapel £552, besides large parcels and boxes of clothing, both old and new, which we generally received free of any cost. Part of the above was sent with a request that it might be distributed amongst sister churches, which was duly done, the kind donors saying they looked at Mr. Kershaw as a father among the churches in the North of England. Several of the ministers, viz., Mr. Philpot, Mr. Tiptaft, Mr. Tanner, Mr. Marks, Mr. Mortimer, Mr. Fremlin, Mr. Grace, and others I may not have known, as well as private Christians, are gone home since that period, to their eternal rest; yet many are still living; and I am sure it will be a pleasure to these to hear that their bounty not only fed and clothed the recipients of it, but was a source of great comfort and relief to us in being the means or channel of relief, and not being obliged to see and hear so much want with little to ameliorate it.

I must, before I leave this part of the narrative, mention the liberality of several of our own people, who not only gave large sums of money, but flannel and calico pieces, which were very acceptable to us to distribute, as we saw such articles needed. And I would also acknowledge the mercy of the Lord in granting to my dear partner and myself such a measure of health and mental vigour as enabled us to wade through all that came upon us. In the distribution of the money, we were greatly assisted by the deacons, and one of their dear partners assisted in the dis-

tribution of clothing; yet all the correspondence devolved upon us. Many of the ministers wrote for a true account of the state of things, to read to their congregations; and we always sent it. Also private individuals wished for the same, that they might go amongst their friends to collect money and clothing; all which, with the letters of acknowledgment and thanks for their liberality and kindness, devolved upon us. Such was the amount of writing that it was frequently midnight before our labours were ended.*

MR. KERSHAW'S JUBILEE AT HOPE CHAPEL.

THE next event that I feel it a privilege to record is of a more pleasant character, viz., "An account of the Jubilee Meeting held at Hope Chapel," which I have copied almost *verbatim* from "The Christian's Monthly News," of April 1st, 1867:

"On Wednesday evening, March 6th, a most interesting event was celebrated at Hope Chapel, in the presence of a large assembly of persons, who met together to do honour to Mr. John Kershaw, of the Baptist chapel, Hope Street, in commemoration of this being the 50th year since he entered upon his labours as pastor of the above church and congregation. Many of his friends thought it a very proper and fitting time to acknowledge publicly the value they set upon his labours amongst them for half a century, and also to assure him that, although he was far advanced in years, being in his 75th year, he was still near and dear to them. The arrangements had been carried out by a committee of 20 gentlemen, to whom great credit is due

* In the "Gospel Standard" for 1861 and following years, accounts of the distress in the North were inserted by the publisher, Mr. J. Gadsby, and the assistance of friends was solicited. Donations, in consequence, poured in so liberally that upwards of £2,000 was received by the editor and publisher, independently of the above £552. Also a large quantity of clothes. The whole was distributed amongst the churches connected with us in the North. In obtaining correct information respecting the state of the poor in our town, and statistical matters, my dear husband was deeply indebted to G. L. Ashworth, Esq., a gentleman who took the most active part in the Relief Committee, soup kitchen, &c., who gave him all the desired information with the greatest cheerfulness, at the same time being aware the money sent was not to augment their general fund.

for the manner in which they were perfected. More than 600 persons took tea in the school-room, in two parties, about 500 and 100, the library, or upper part of the room, being appropriated to friends from a distance. As soon as the first party had taken tea, they adjourned to the chapel, and a prayer-meeting was held. This was continued until 6.15; and at 6.30 the proper meeting of the evening commenced. The chapel was soon crowded in every part, there being at least 800 persons present. After singing and prayer, the chair was taken by Mr. Tatham, who had at his right hand Mr. Kershaw, at his left Mr. Hastings, and around him Mr. John Gadsby, London; Mr. Freeman, Liverpool; Mr. G. Chandler, Stockport; Mr. Sheard, Halifax; Mr. E. C. Lewis, minister, Rochdale; Mr. I. E. Gibbs, Mr. Benjamin Tweedale, Mr. William Jackson, Mr. Abraham Thompson, Mr. R. Hindle, Accrington; Mr. Knight, Liverpool; &c.

"Mr. Kershaw said it was usual on occasions of this nature to greet the various speakers with marks of applause; but he hoped that on this occasion there would be nothing of the kind, but that everything would be conducted in a solemn way. And we may observe that his advice was almost fully carried out, though it was evident that the large audience had often great difficulty in restraining their feelings when some of the speakers made a good remark, and especially when Mrs. Kershaw was called to the platform, as hereafter stated.

"The Chairman, in his opening remarks, expressed the great pleasure he felt at taking part in such an event, though he would much rather have taken some more humble position. He counted it a pleasure to join in showing his esteem and respect for their dear minister. It was an event which it was not possible for him to see again, and it was an event he had never seen before. Mr. Kershaw had now been their stated minister for 50 years, and had preached the gospel for 53 years or upwards. It was well known that if he had been inclined to better himself in a pecuniary sense, he might have left them long ago. He had received calls from London, Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, and other places; but it appeared he had desired to stay at Hope Chapel, to live and die with the people amongst whom he had been brought up; and that

self-denial and love of the people amongst whom he had been labouring spoke highly in his favour. They had won for him the esteem of all present; and his (the chairman's) prayer was that he might be longed spared to them; for, when they lost him, which they all hoped would not be for a long time yet, they would never see his like again; and it was improbable that any present worshippers there would have the pleasure of celebrating any future minister's jubilee. He (the chairman) did not know that there was a person now living whom he could remember so far back as he could their esteemed minister. He had known him from being a boy, and he had an idea that young people particularly noticed professing Christians. He had been connected with that school and church for a great many years, and he had noticed Mr. Kershaw's walk, and he could not recollect a single instance in which he should for a moment hesitate to follow their beloved pastor's example. They all knew that people preached, and sometimes they preached what they did not practise; but he believed he could truly say that the example of their pastor had accorded with his preaching. Therefore he was not surprised at seeing so many Rochdale friends present. There was also his esteemed friend Mr. Gadsby, from London, and also friends from other places at a distance, including Liverpool, Manchester, Halifax, and other towns, anxious to show their esteem for Mr. Kershaw. He had no doubt that when Mr. Kershaw had gone to preach at these places, the people had always found him an honest, good man, and that was doubtless the reason why they were present to witness the presentation of some substantial token of their esteem. He trusted that Mr. Kershaw might be long spared to them, though that was almost too much to expect at his time of life, as he was now in his 75th year. It just struck him there was a minister on the platform whom he highly respected, and whom he was glad to see present; and by the local newspapers he had noticed that that gentleman's congregation had been presenting him with some mark of their respect. Mr. Kershaw had been amongst his congregation half a century, and the gentleman he alluded to had been with them more than a quarter of a century. He alluded to Mr. E. C. Lewis. Before sitting down, he wished to call the attention of the meeting to

Mr. Kershaw's usefulness during the cotton famine, when he distributed no less than £600, besides large quantities of clothes, both old and new, to the poor people of this district. And they must be quite aware that those supplies would not have been voluntarily sent to him, had Mr. Kershaw not gained the respect of those in distant places who were disposed to help their poor brethren in the North. Happily that time had passed, he hoped never to return. In this important work, Mr. Kershaw was greatly assisted by his dear wife, who was to be honoured with her husband that night. In conclusion the chairman said: It is highly gratifying to me, and I am sure it must be more so to you, Mr. Kershaw, to see so many persons present to express to you the high esteem in which you are held by them, as an acknowledgment of your past usefulness as a minister of the gospel. I sincerely trust that you may yet be long spared amongst us, and that the same Almighty hand that has held you up till now may yet add many seals to your ministry; and that when the time comes that you must be taken away, which I hope is still far distant, though we cannot expect that it will be very far,—I pray that when the time of your departure draws nigh you will be enabled to anticipate the chorus above, and in the beautiful language of the poet say,

"'Happy songsters!
Soon shall I your chorus join.'

I have omitted to state that it was arranged by the committee that none of Mr. Kershaw's friends should be invited. Mr. Kershaw's friends were so numerous that it was impossible they could invite all. If some had been invited and not others, it might have given great offence; so it was thought best to invite none, and make all welcome that came.

"Mr. Hastings rose to make some presentations to Mr. Kershaw. He said: Mr. Chairman and Friends,—It is with feelings of timidity that I rise on the present occasion, for I am not worthy to make this presentation to Mr. Kershaw; but, having been long connected with this place of worship, it seemed to be my duty to do it; and certainly I am very proud of the opportunity. It was 46 years this month, he continued, since he first saw Mr. Kershaw in that place. At that time they were both poor, their pastor having

just left the loom, and himself the plough. Looking back to their youth, he thought it was good that they should have been in straitened circumstances, though at the time it was not so pleasant, for poverty in youth made good tradesmen and good ministers. Of the latter type they were proud to have Mr. Kershaw as a noble example. A circumstance often came to his mind respecting a dear and valued friend of theirs, their old friend Thomas Niven, the Scotchman. He often told them both of a bottle from which they were to drink a glass every morning, but not an intoxicating bottle, and it would lead them to success. It was the bottle of perseverance, sobriety, and punctuality. This advice he thought Mr. Kershaw had followed eminently, and with great success. It was now some 70 years since the providence of God led Thomas Niven to this country. Before that time the Lord had laid sore affliction upon him, and once he was tempted to end his existence; but a voice restrained him. He went home a changed man, and was afterwards a great help to their dear pastor at Hope Chapel, in the earlier part of his ministry. When Mr. Warburton, who immediately preceded Mr. Kershaw in the pastorate of this chapel, went away, the cause was very low. Though Mr. Kershaw had a wife and four children, his salary, to begin with, would not be £30 a year, and to help himself out he had to teach a school. At that period the side aisles in the chapel were flagged, but not pewed, and the walls had only one coat of plaster. In short, the place was very dreary. William Leach, then a Sunday scholar, could tell how cold it was sitting over the bare flags, without shoes or stockings. Soon afterwards, some of the congregation became discontented, and thought themselves qualified for parsons. They created considerable annoyance, and eventually left, commencing a place of worship in Drake Street. Their cause soon failed. Besides all this, when Mr. Kershaw first came, the chapel was in debt to the amount of £600. Mr. Kershaw, with praiseworthy courage, went to the metropolis and other places, to beg for the cause, and succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, bringing back the magnificent sum, at that time, of £200. And he (Mr. Hastings) remembered their dear minister saying how the eyes of the members glistened when he emptied the purse in their presence. Since then

he had received calls from other places, where he might have had double his present salary, but he had still been content to stay with them. After a refusal of one of those offers, a few of his friends felt it incumbent to mark their sense of his constancy and love, and they presented him with a purse containing £60; but instead of appropriating that to his own private use, he nobly gave it as the nucleus of a fund for enlarging the chapel, which, mostly through his kind efforts, was carried out; and he had lived to see both chapel and school free from debt, the realisation of a desire which long held the foremost place in his heart. He was now too old to leave them, and friends here and from a distance, who knew he had stood the test for the space of 50 years, had determined not to let this occasion pass without presenting him with some token of the high esteem in which he was held. The testimonial included contributions even from across the broad Atlantic, and was not confined to Dissenters merely, but there were Churchmen, magistrates, and almost every variety of professors in Rochdale who had expressed their respect for Mr. Kershaw, on account of his consistent conduct. The gross sum he had to present Mr. Kershaw, including Mrs. Kershaw's present, amounted to the sum of £325. He then proceeded to make the presentations, which included a gold watch and chain, the watch bearing the following inscription:

"'Presented to Mr. John Kershaw, as a token of respect, by his friends, on his completion of the 50th year as minister at Hope Chapel.—Rochdale, 6th March, 1867.'

The next was a purse of gold, and he had also another present. A blind lady, Miss Turner, of Manchester, had very kindly knitted a beautiful purse as a present; but the committee, thinking it would be better to patronize their own Sunday school, presented him with a purse knitted by Mrs. Schofield; and the purse containing the gold was from Miss Fountain, of Lower Place.

"The Chairman then called upon Mr. Benjamin Tweedale, one of the deacons, to present the address. Mr. Tweedale said: My dear Friends,—I have very great pleasure in presenting our dear minister with this address from the church and congregation. I consider myself highly honoured in being selected to perform this part of this evening's pro-

ceedings. I do so with great satisfaction, because the sentiments and principles which it embodies speak my whole heart and soul; and I know it contains those glorious truths which Mr. Kershaw has been preaching and teaching here for the last half century, and upon which we build our hopes for the salvation of our immortal souls. Mr. T. then read the address, as follows:

"'To Mr. John Kershaw, Minister of the Church of Christ, at Hope Chapel, Rochdale.

"'Dearly-beloved Pastor,—Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, and the whole Israel of God. In presenting this address to you, together with a gold watch and chain, and a purse of gold, we hope our object is not to flatter you, but to manifest to yourself and also to the world our united esteem for you as a man, and as an honoured servant of the most high God, who has stood so long on the walls of Zion, showing lost sinners the way of salvation, through the love, blood, and righteousness of Christ, the eternal Son of God, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification, according to covenant arrangements between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in which all the persons interested were set apart to be quickened in time by the blessed Spirit, who raises to life their dead souls, and separates them from the world, because they are not of the world; and at his appointed time he takes them all home, to be for ever with the Lord.

"'These and other like truths you have been proclaiming here and elsewhere for 53 years, and as pastor amongst us for 50 years; and we pray that you may be yet long spared to preach them in our hearing, and that when the Lord calls you home you may be favoured, like good old Simeon, to say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Amen.

(Signed) "'Benjamin Tweedale,
"'William Jackson,
"'Abraham Thompson, Deacons.

"'Rochdale, March 6th, 1867.'

Speaking to Mr. Kershaw, Mr. T. said: "I have the pleasure, dear friend, of presenting you with this address, having known you long. I do feel gratified in being favoured with this honourable post, of presenting this address to one of the servants of the most high God. May the Lord bless you.

"Mr. Freeman, of Liverpool, was called upon by the Chairman to support the address. He said: Mr. Chairman,—When I came to join the congregation and friends here in their expressions of affection this evening, I had not the least idea that I should occupy the position I now do. I entirely sympathize with the object we are met to celebrate. I do esteem it a pleasure indeed to move an address which sets forth the great truths which have been preached by my friend and brother, and which are the foundation of the life of God in the souls of all them that love and fear the Lord. I think our brother Kershaw has abundant and blessed evidence that there are many who love and esteem him highly as a minister of the gospel, both in Rochdale and in many other parts of the country; and it certainly calls for heartfelt gratitude from both Mr. Kershaw and the church of God that his labours have been so blessed and ordained to the ingathering of the church by the preaching of the glorious gospel, through the teaching and under the direction of the Holy Ghost, bringing poor lost sinners to a knowledge of their interest in Jesus Christ, saved by free grace, and having a precious experience in their souls of a gracious hope of a better resurrection through Jesus Christ, when they shall experience a jubilee in their souls by a deliverance from condemnation, the effects of their sin and guilt. 'Him that honoureth me,' says God, 'will I honour,' &c. We have a striking proof of the faithfulness of God in the very long period in which Mr. Kershaw has been upheld as a stated labourer in his field in this town; and, as the chairman very justly observed, we shall never see his like again at this place. And another thing I must say, Mr. Kershaw is more free from jealousy of his ministerial brethren than any other servant of God I know; for jealousy is a sad affliction, I am sorry to say, amongst us parsons generally. I am troubled with it myself. But the greatest and best of my dear brother's prospects are before him. He has much, indeed, to look back upon of the goodness and mercy of the Lord, but his great and eternal reward is yet to come; and he attributed all to the goodness of an ever-gracious God.

"Mr. Chandler, of Stockport, being called upon, further supported the address. Mr. Kershaw, he said, has preached the things contained in the address for many years; and

now that he is old, they are the stay of his soul, his comfort, and consolation. I certainly have not known Mr. Kershaw so long as some of you, but I have known him many years, and I well know that he has, by God's blessing, been a preacher of the gospel who has honoured his profession. This has given him a distinguished place in my affections; and my prayer is that his life may be spared for many years, that he may go and unfurl the banner of the glorious gospel before the world, that wherever he goes he may kindle the beacon-fire of the gospel, and that when he has done here he may be taken to rest in immortal glory, where sorrow can never come.

"Mr. E. C. Lewis (minister of Lady Huntingdon's chapel, Rochdale), responding to the call of the Chairman, said: Mr. Kershaw's friends are so numerous that, in the arrangements that were made in regard to this meeting, none were to be invited, for it was not known where to draw the line. So I came to this meeting uninvited, and I had no idea of being called upon to address the audience. However, I have very great pleasure in saying a few words. I am sure this event must be deeply interesting, not merely to Mr. Kershaw, but to all who have assembled together on this occasion. 'I would not give flattering titles to any man,' says Elihu, 'for in so doing my Maker will take me away.' What Mr. Kershaw is and has been is entirely owing to the grace of God; and he magnifies the grace of God towards himself as you magnify the grace of God in him. A friend of his has referred to the fact of his having been always distinguished by a kindly Christian spirit. That I have always found in him in all that I have had to do with him. A brother, and a Christian brother, I have always regarded Mr. Kershaw; and I am sure that in making this statement I but utter the sentiments of all my brethren in this town and neighbourhood. That he should have been spared to live amongst you so long to preach the gospel so faithfully, and to exhibit the Saviour so fully and as the All in all of human salvation, is to us all a source of much thankfulness and joy. I do not know that Mr. Kershaw ever signed any articles of a creed, but I suppose he has adhered to the statement of good Mr. Harvey, who used to say that he always proclaimed the three R's—Man's Ruin by Sin, Man's Redemption by Christ, and Man's Re-

generation by the Spirit. Now, these constitute the great fundamentals of our religion. Whenever I have gone to London, I have seldom missed hearing of our friend. I have some dear relatives there who would have been delighted to be here this evening, who always go to hear him whenever he preaches in London, and who always hear him with profit and delight. I am sure that while our friend has much to look back upon with gratitude and thankfulness, he has also much to look forward to in hope. The best is all to come, and all secure. A little longer, and having richly enjoyed in his own soul the consolations of that precious gospel he has so faithfully preached amongst you, he shall experience in all its richness and fulness the extent of those blessings of which, while we are here, we can form so small a conception. It is my most fervent wish and prayer that his life may yet be prolonged to enjoy the good things he has had so kindly heaped upon him this evening, and that in a green old age he may be enabled still to testify, 'The Lord is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.'

"Mr. J. Gadsby, being next called upon by the Chairman, stepped forward and said: Mr. Kershaw, if I were to say to you that you are the oldest, and, apart from my own family, the dearest friend I have upon earth, I should only repeat what you have heard me say before. You have known me from a child. You knew me as a boy, when spoiled by an over-fond but mistaken mother. You knew me as an apprentice; and many times did you promise that if ever I commenced business on my own account I should be your printer; and I trust I shall never be ashamed of saying I am a printer. You knew me when I had so commenced, and you, in part, fulfilled your promise. I say in part, because you kept part back. I knew that your Autobiography was in manuscript, and I hoped that I should have the honour of bringing it out; but in this I was disappointed. You were baptized by my late dear father; and I believe if one man above all others was attached to my father, that man was you. This alone would have been a sufficient inducement for me to come down to attend this meeting; for, though I naturally feel gratified if friends shake hands with me for my own sake, I feel ten times more so when they shake hands with me for my father's sake.

Still, it was not this alone which did induce me to come down. I have known what it is literally to suffer faintness for want of a cup of cold water; and I have also experienced the sweetness of partaking of the reviving draught. So spiritually. I have known what it is to thirst for and faint after the water of life, and I trust I have often been refreshed in drinking thereof as it has flowed, instrumentally, from your lips. When, therefore, I heard from my sister that this meeting was to be held, and that you were to be presented with a testimonial, my mind was speedily made up as to what I ought to do. I consulted with the deacons of Gower Street chapel, with which I am connected, and hoped they would have allowed the matter to be announced in the chapel publicly; but they did not feel that they could do so, having just had a subscription for the cause at Ramsgate, and having so recently had their yearly collections for the poor. I therefore set to work on my own responsibility, writing letters to several friends. It was impossible for me to call upon them personally, as we live so far apart. A few days afterwards, I received a letter from our worthy chairman, asking me to do what I had already begun to do. I felt bound to confine myself to the friends connected with Gower Street, as my time is really so much occupied that I could not go beyond, and as, indeed, I presumed our chairman would write to others in London as well as to myself. The result of my labours I have now the pleasure of handing to you, namely, a cheque for £36 3s. 6d. I also hand to you a list of the donors. I am sure you will feel great pleasure in casting your eyes over the names, as you will recognise amongst them those of some of your dear friends. I wrote to one gentleman, with whom I am in frequent correspondence—one who is near and dear to both of us—not to ask him to subscribe, but to tell him if he had occasion to write to me after a certain day he must direct for me at my sister's, Bowdon, as I hoped to be there on the 1st, to be at Rochdale on the 6th; for the friends there were going to hold a jubilee meeting, and present Mr. Kershaw with a testimonial. He immediately replied, 'Lay down a sovereign for me. Mr. Kershaw deserves the testimonial well, after standing up so many years for the truth, and for a life and conversation so unblemished.' I have, therefore, the pleasure of giving

to you the sovereign. And I will tell you now by whom that sovereign was sent—our dear friend Philpot. And I am sure when he said you were worthy of the best testimonial that could be raised, he meant what he said, for he is not a man to say one thing and mean another. Rest assured, my dear friend Kershaw, that though in my earlier days, when I was led astray by one who is now no more, whom, therefore, I would, like the Orientals, wish to rest in peace, I did on one or two occasions manifest towards you a little irritability of temper, yet I trust our union of late years has been stronger than it would have been had it not been for those circumstances. Rest assured that while you and I are in existence, you will ever be dear to my heart as one of the dearest friends I have upon earth.

"The Chairman then announced that the total amount of the presentations had been increased to £362 3s. 6d., and requested Mrs. Kershaw to step upon the platform. She having complied,

"Mr. John Sheard, of Halifax, was next called upon by the Chairman. He said: Mr. Chairman and dear friends,—I did not expect, neither did I intend, to appear before you on the platform this evening; but, having been earnestly requested by some of the friends to read the address and present the watch to our dear esteemed friend, Mrs. Kershaw, I could not well decline the honour done to me. He then presented the watch and read the address. The address accompanied that to Mr. Kershaw. The two were placed in juxtaposition, as two leaves in a book, the pages being exquisitely worked and illuminated by the pen, and the whole enclosed between beautiful morocco covers. The address ran as follows:

"'To Mrs. Kershaw, our dearly-beloved Sister in the Lord, and the beloved Wife of our esteemed Pastor, Mr. John Kershaw, Hope Chapel, Rochdale.

"'In the kind providence of God, we are favoured this evening with the privilege of meeting together to present you with this address and a gold watch and chain as a token of our regard for you as a help-mate to your dear husband, and as a servant of the church of God at Hope Chapel. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God for his great goodness in putting his fear and grace into your heart,

qualifying you for the honourable and very important position you now hold, and which by the grace of God you have been hitherto enabled to fill to the great comfort of your dear husband, and to the satisfaction of the church and congregation with which you are connected. We especially value your labours in the Sabbath school, and also in the affairs of the church of the living God, in feeding the hungry, and giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick, in speaking a word of comfort to the afflicted and tried of the Lord's people, and in pointing them to the Lamb of God, the sin-atoning Lamb. May the dear Lord continue his goodness toward you, and lift upon you the light of his countenance, and enable you to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

(Signed) "'Benjamin Tweedale,
"'William Jackson,
"'Abraham Thompson,
"'Deacons.

"'Rochdale, March 6th, 1867.'

"In presenting the address and watch, Mr. Sheard, addressing Mrs. Kershaw, said: I have very great pleasure, on behalf of the committee and friends, in presenting you with these marks of their esteem. May your valuable and useful life be spared for many years to come.

"Mrs. Kershaw personally acknowledged it, saying: It is not common, I believe, for females to speak in public; but the friends will bear with me if I just say a word; and it is (speaking to Mr. Sheard) that I have experienced nothing but kindness from you, my dear friend, and I greatly value your presentation to me this evening, on behalf of my dear friends, because I know you are not one that likes to come out in public. And as a very great friend of mine, I gladly receive it at your hands. I likewise wish to say that I deeply feel, and it has been on my mind the whole of this evening, what Jacob said when speaking of the Lord: 'I am not worthy of the goodness, and the mercy, and the truth of which he makes me so liberally to share.' —Mrs. Kershaw then returned to her seat in the body of the chapel.

"Mr. Kershaw rose in acknowledgment of his testimonial, and said: Mr. Chairman, and dear and respected friends,—As I lay in my bed last night, for a very long time sleep-

less, thinking upon the evening we are now passing through, a portion of God's word was brought sweetly, powerfully, and blessedly to my mind: 'Thou shalt remember the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee in the wilderness these forty years.' Ah, I said, dear Lord, for fifty years of labour amongst thy dear people here, which has to be commemorated this evening (it being in the morning when I was thinking of these things), and sixty years, dear Lord, this year since it graciously pleased thee to make me the happy partaker of thy Holy Spirit; and I have proved to a demonstration in my own experience and conduct to be true, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation, and teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.' A passage has sounded in my ears, especially in the prospect of this meeting. My friend Mr. Lewis stated it: 'By the grace of God, I am what I am.' And when I think of the manifold mercies bestowed upon a poor polluted worm by my blessed Lord and Master, and the favour which he has given me in the hearts of so many of his people, both at home and abroad, the words that I spoke upon last Lord's day morning come again and again, and he renders them very sweet, 'Not unto us, not unto us; but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the praise, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake.' I had very sweet meditations on my bed in looking back at the way the Lord my God has led me since I came to live at this place. And had I had the opportunity I fully intended to go through them, which would have taken me, should I have been very cursory, an hour or an hour and a half. But, my friends, we are happily so circumstanced, having had so many friends to address you, that I will not now enter upon the chain of things that I had sweetly and solemnly upon my mind. And as some of our friends are going away by the train and must be at the station by train time, I can make no further enlargement, only on that which immediately falls upon me. That God, before whom I speak, knows I lie not when I say I cannot find language sufficiently strong to thank, to bless, and to praise my dear Lord and Master for his great goodness towards his unworthy servant, both providentially and spiritually, all the way through; and for the comfortable circumstances in providence that he has placed me in, for more than twenty

years, so that I stood in no immediate need of the gold you have presented to me on this occasion. O no. Not that I regard it the less, but rather the more. But my thankfulness is to the Lord, for his bountiful providence towards me day by day; and more especially for making my very poor imperfect labours in any measure a blessing to the household of faith, both at home and abroad. I never thought that old John Kershaw would have such a gold watch and chain as that. I did not want it; but the Lord has put it into the hearts of my friends to give it me, and I heartily thank them for it. I thank my kind friends for beginning this work, and for beginning it in the dark, and keeping it underground from me as long as they could. I heard very little about it, and I did not wish to hear; and when people wanted to tell me, I said, "Say nothing to me."—[At the request of a friend in the body of the chapel, the watch and chain were placed upon Mr. Kershaw's neck.]—Mr. K., in continuing his remarks, then said: Now, my friends, I shall keep it gratefully, and when poor old John Kershaw's gone, it shall be kept in the family of my son John, and when the Lord shall take him, it shall be for my grandson Jonathan; and I sincerely hope it will be kept as an heirloom in the family of the poor unworthy minister of Hope Chapel for many generations to come. And they will have a token in this watch that he was not a pest to civil society, that his labours were honoured, and that he laboured with success for so many years.—Having received a hint from the chairman, he resumed: The chairman says I must not forget my wife; and I don't want to forget her. Now, my wife and I are sometimes a little at variance, and we were rather a bit a-crook to-day. Whenever I speak concerning my wife, in public, it is always by way of commendation. And if a man has a good wife he should speak well of her. But she doesn't want to be spoken of publicly, and to-day she said, "See you don't say anything about me. If you do I shall be angry." But I think when we get home at the fireside to-night she won't be very cross. When she has got a good gold watch and chain, and sees her husband at the other side of the fire with the like useful present, I think there will not be much crossness.—In further speaking of his wife, he observed that it had been a very great blessing to himself, to the church of God here, to the sick and

the afflicted, and to the young friends connected with the school and church, that God sent her to Rochdale. He also gave the testimony of the poor people in the district, whom she visited and relieved, as to her great worth. Sometimes when I go to visit the sick they tell me that I am in such a hurry they would rather Mrs. Kershaw came to visit them than I, because she stays a little longer. They tell me that I am the vicar and she is the curate; and the curates always have the hardest work. Now I must conclude. The Lord be praised for his manifold mercies towards us both.

"Mr. J. Gadsby then, in a few hurried remarks, as he had to leave by the train for Manchester, and thence to Bowdon, in Cheshire, proposed a vote of thanks to the committee, which was seconded by Mr. Robert Barker, who said that as a representative of one of the oldest congregations (High Street) in the town, he cordially expressed his high estimation of Mr. Kershaw, and alluded to the esteem in which he was held by the sister church and congregation at Providence Chapel.

"The motion having been carried, Mr. Eli Brierley suitably responded; and on the motion of Mr. Lewis, seconded by Mr. I. E. Gibbs (secretary to the committee), a similar tribute was paid to the chairman, who acknowledged the compliment; and the proceedings were closed with singing and prayer."

Before dismissing the account of the Jubilee, I hope to be excused if I add a few words on a subject which has lain with some weight on my mind. Having repeatedly been asked why the friends at Zoar Chapel, London, are not mentioned in connection with the Gower Street friends, I would inform the reader that they had not the least information respecting the celebration of Mr. Kershaw's Jubilee, which to this day they deeply regret, as there are those amongst them who say that had they been aware, nothing but sickness would have prevented their being present on so interesting an occasion; and substantial tokens of their love were given him when he went amongst them the following May. This church and people have always manifested the greatest attachment to my dear husband, and he felt the same towards them. He always said they were the link in the chain of divine providence to

introduce him to the great metropolis and to a large circle of Christian friends, and of getting much temporal help to the cause at Rochdale at a time when they much needed it. Their numerous troubles, in which he was often a participator, tended greatly to endear them to him, as well as to me, who had the privilege of being a member of the church for 22 years.

At the close of the Jubilee meeting, as we were conversing on the events of the day, my dear husband remarked, "It has been a great day. The next great day will be my burial day;" and truly there seems to have been but a step between them.

THE CLOSE OF MR. KERSHAW'S LIFE.

At the time of the celebration of the Jubilee, Mr. Kershaw was in robust health, and to all human appearance bade fair to be spared to his family and the church of God for several years; but a few months afterwards there was a manifest falling off in his bodily strength; and the increased solemnity and depth of his preaching impressed the minds of the people "that he was ripening for glory." Such, too, was the conviction of his own mind, especially during the winter preceding his illness. He repeatedly said to me and the young friend who lived with us, whom he greatly loved, and who is his daughter in the faith, that we were a little happy family; but he thought something would soon take place to remove him from us; and at the close of our family prayer in the evening he would often rise from his knees and go upstairs without speaking to us; but as he took hold of the stair-rail, would generally repeat:

"Prepare me, gracious God,
To stand before thy face;
Thy Spirit must the work perform;
For it is all of grace."

Often did he speak of the goodness of the Lord to him in granting him such mercies in his old age, such domestic comforts, no heavy family trials, and being greatly blessed with a loving, affectionate church and people, who, as they saw age and infirmities grow upon him, increased in tenderness and willingness to do everything to please him.

My dear husband was highly favoured with prudent,

discreet, and loving deacons, with whom he took sweet counsel in all matters relating to the church and the welfare of Zion; and I feel assured that the following incident will be interesting to all who can say respecting Zion (Ps. cxxii.),

"There my best friends, my kindred dwell," &c.

Having occasion, one Lord's day, to go into the minister's vestry to speak to Mr. Kershaw, some time after the close of the afternoon service, on opening the door a most delightful scene appeared before me. There sat the aged minister at the head of the table, several aged deacons sat around with gravity and solemnity stamped upon their countenances, all in peace and concord, conversing on the affairs of Zion; when the following words immediately came into my mind: "For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." (Ps. cxxii. 5.) Altogether it made such a pleasing impression on my mind that I hope to remember it to the end of my days.

My dear husband was kept sensible of his own weakness and frailty, and would often quote the words of the venerable Abraham Booth, in his address to Mr. Hopkins (see "Pastoral Cautions," p. 22): "I have borne the ministerial character for upwards of twenty-five years. Though I have been, perhaps, of some little use in the church of God, and though I have a greater share of esteem among religious people than I had any reason to expect, yet, after all, it is possible for me, in one single hour of temptation, to blast my character, to ruin my public usefulness, and to render my warmest Christian friends ashamed of owning me. Hold thou me up, O Lord, and I shall be safe." Like dear Paul, he often prayed, "So that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts xx. 24.)

Most of the readers of the "Gospel Standard" will remember the letters of a Mr. Hudson, a gentleman who was in the excise, and for a time resided at Manchester, and occasionally preached for dear Mr. Gadsby. Mr. Kershaw also knew and esteemed him, and used often to relate a conversation he had with him, in which he said, "I am like the little children who want their mothers to give

them a cake or something nice to go to bed with ; so I want my heavenly Father to give me some sweet text of scripture or verse of a hymn to fall asleep with ; " and latterly, if I spoke to him, he used to say, " Do not talk. I am begging of the Lord to give me something good to fall asleep with. I am like Mr. Hudson."

I should not mention these little incidents but to show how the Lord was preparing him for the great change which was shortly to come over him ; in the which I have been encouraged by godly persons in whose spiritual judgmen I have confidence.

The sixth chapter of Ephesians was a great blessing to my husband, especially from the 11th to the 19th verses. He felt the need of a Christian minister being clad with the whole armour of God, as they have to stand as watchmen on the walls of Zion, and in the fore ranks of the battle, their foes often manifesting the spirit of the King of Syria, when he said, " Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the King of Israel." (2 Chron. xviii. 30.)

During the months of March and April of the year 1869, the chapel underwent a thorough repair. Considerable alterations were made, and the place painted, &c., under the supervision of an efficient committee. My dear husband was anxious that all should be completed before he went to London, and this being accomplished, he re-opened it on Lord's day, April 18th, when he preached two sermons from Ps. xlvi. 4 : " There is a river," &c., with great animation and delight, rejoicing in the river of salvation and the streams thereof which had flowed into the hearts of the people, constraining them to love and good works, in contributing so liberally to the repairs, that all was paid for, with a surplus remaining.

He left home on Tuesday, April 20th, 1869, in tolerable health and spirits, preaching at Mr. Sears' chapel, Shefford, on his way to London, which had been his custom to do for many years. He went through his engagements in London and other places for the first three weeks pretty well ; but Mr. Covell, Mr. John Gadsby, and other friends saw a great change in his appearance, and thought he would not visit London any more. His labours the last week were so abundant that his strength failed him, and it was with difficulty that he got through his last Sabbath at Zoar

Chapel. He returned home on the Monday following, relinquishing his engagement to preach at Potton on his return home.

I did not accompany my beloved husband in his last journey to London, as I had often previously done. He seemed to wish me to remain at home. As the school was to be painted, and the house we resided in wanted some repairs and painting, and as he said he was so well, he thought I should be more useful at home. I accordingly remained at home, and everything was proceeded with in the most satisfactory manner, the chapel, schoolroom and house being all clean and in such good repair as I had never seen them on any previous occasion. Yet, after all was finished, there came such a depression of spirits and sadness of heart, the anticipation of some great trouble, that I could not account for, only on the ground that sorrow is mixed with all our joys, that we should be reminded "this is not our rest."

Mr. Kershaw returned home from London on the 17th of May. I and a grandson went up to the station to meet him and assist with his luggage; and I felt, on seeing his countenance so much altered for the worse, as if an arrow had pierced me to the heart. He was very poorly in body, and thought his work was nearly done; but we hoped, with nursing and rest, he would soon be restored to his usual health. He appeared much better in a few days, and on the following Sabbath preached in the morning from Deut. viii. 2: "And thou shalt remember all the way," &c. In the afternoon he spoke from 1 Sam. xxx. 6: "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." It was with difficulty he ascended the pulpit stairs, but we were all astonished at the vigorous manner in which he was enabled to speak. He was evidently in the full enjoyment of the precious truths he brought forward. It was a very solemn time to many present. He opened the afternoon service with the 4th hymn:

"Keep silence, all created things," &c.;

and concluded with the 143rd:

"Rock of Ages, shelter me," &c.

One of the friends said she should never forget his look as

he glanced round upon the congregation whilst we were singing the last verse :

"While I draw this fleeting breath," &c.,

his countenance looked so death-like.

When he had finished, his strength completely gave way, and his medical attendant said it was complete exhaustion from over-exertion, causing derangement of the liver, with a tendency to jaundice. During the week my dear husband often said his work was done, and he appeared quite happy in the prospect of death ; and early on Saturday morning began talking to me about some things he should like to be attended to at his funeral. I tried to put him off it; when he remarked, "My dear, you will have to come to it, and you had better hear it whilst I am able to speak."

The day following, he appeared better, and told me that he had been meditating on Phil. i., especially from verse 19. When the young person already referred to, who lived with us, went into the room and enquired how he was, he said, "Rather better in body, and very happy in soul. I am with Paul in Phil. i. ; " and he requested me to read it. He commented on the 20th verse, and said he longed to depart and be with Christ, which was far better. Still, if it was the Lord's will for him to abide in the flesh a little longer, for our furtherance and joy of faith, he was willing to remain ; but earnestly desired that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. Christ was indeed magnified in his body during that long affliction in which he was confined to his room until the latter end of July, during five or six weeks of which time we were daily expecting his death, not the least hope being entertained of his recovery by most of those who saw him. But O the joy of his soul during that time ! It seemed inexpressible. His cup seemed filled to overflowing. His daughter-in-law, the same person mentioned in the former part of the narrative, came to assist in nursing him, and on one occasion he said to her, "If any friends come to see me, tell them I am not able to talk with them ; but my feelings are described in the 12th chapter of Hebrews, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th verses : "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church

of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Another time, when it was thought he could not survive long, he said he hoped that would be the day the Lord would take him home, but directly after added, "No; I wish to wait the Lord's time for the day and hour of my departure."

The day following, Mr. Lake, one of the deacons of Zoar Chapel, London, came to see him, when he requested his daughter-in-law to read 2 Cor. v. 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and he told Mr. Lake that the contents of this verse were the solemn persuasion of his mind. He felt his earthly tabernacle was dissolving, and it was his desire that it should do so, that he might be liberated from the tenement of clay, and be put in possession of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

On one occasion, seeing the tears roll down his face, I said, "My dear, I think those are not tears of sorrow." With all the energy he possessed, he exclaimed, "Sorrow! No! Never name sorrow; but joy!"

Another time, after his medical attendant, who was very kind and attentive to him, had been, he asked his daughter-in-law if the doctor did not say his pulse got weaker; and on her telling him that he said it did, he replied, "My soul pants stronger and stronger for glory."

Not being able to raise himself or turn in bed, and requiring moving so frequently, he had to have two attendants with him in the night for several weeks, and many of them said it was quite a treat to be with him, he was so blessedly favoured in his soul, and enabled to bring forward so many precious things. He would often have those about him engaged in reading the word of God and good hymns.

It is impossible to remember anything like all that escaped his lips. His sick chamber was like a little Bethel. One Sabbath morning, as our faithful friend and servant was sitting by him, he beckoned her to him, and on putting her ear down to his mouth, he said to her, "O the blessed

covenant!" She replied, "You feel the stability of the covenant and your interest in it?" "O yes" (with much earnestness); "I am in the covenant. I shall obtain the victory. Blessed covenant! It is all my salvation, and all my desire. I have had such a sweet view of it." He then requested her to read all the hymns upon the covenant in Gadsby's Selection. When she read the 411th:

"Come, saints, and sing in sweet accord," &c.,

the tears rolled down his cheeks; and when she came to the last verse, he waved his hand, and said, "I shall soon be there." At another time he wanted 2 Tim. iv. 1-8 read, dwelling much on verse 8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," &c. Sometimes he wanted all the hymns on death read to him; at other times those on the church, that of Newton's being a great favourite of his:

"Glorious things of thee are spoken," &c.

As also the 112th:

"No more, my God, I boast no more," &c.

Also the 340th:

"A debtor to mercy alone," &c.

And the 482nd:

"In heaven my choicest treasure lies," &c.

And he would often exclaim:

"Hail, blessed time! Lord, bid me come," &c.

The last verse of the 461st was often his language:

"So, whene'er the signal's given," &c.

The doctor for some time wished him to be kept quiet, consequently few friends saw him; but after a few weeks, when we were informed all had been done for him that could be done, he said, as he was not in the doctor's hands, he should like to see his friends; and as they were very anxious to see him, many visited his sick chamber; and it was remarkable what a variety of blessing he wished them in the name of the Lord as they shook hands with him, and for anything they knew were taking their final leave of him. His daughter-in-law said to him, "Father, you are very much like Jacob blessing the tribes of Israel."

It was affecting to see the dear people on a Lord's day often weeping at the prospect of losing their dear pastor, and the words of our blessed and compassionate Lord often came into the mind: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." (Luke xxiii. 28.)

One time, on his being lifted out of bed, his daughter-in-law said, "I should like you to see how nice the chapel-yard is." He replied, "I want to close my eyes on all earthly things. I have taken great pleasure in having the chapel-yard in good order, and have worked in it many hours myself; but now I have done with all earthly objects. I am glad to leave all in such good condition." At another time, when a prayer-meeting was about being held, she asked him what he would like them to pray for. He replied, "For the Lord to take me home, if my work is done, and to reconcile their minds to it as he has done mine."

When service commenced on a Sabbath morning, he would have the hymns read to him verse for verse, as they were sung in the chapel; and then he would be engaged in prayer for the dear Lord to bless the minister in speaking, and the dear people of his charge in hearing, and that sinners might be converted to God, the weak hands strengthened, and the feeble knees confirmed.

One time, when his daughter-in-law was with him, a gloom came over his mind for a short time, when he thought of his flock being left without an under-shepherd; but that portion came to his mind: "The Lord will provide," and he felt a hope that the Lord would provide for them, and he was enabled to leave them in his hands. When speaking of it at another time, he said, "I am encouraged by a precious promise the Lord has given me that he will provide them a pastor after his own heart."

He was patient in his affliction, and resigned to the will of the Lord; but one time he looked troubled, and said, "I feel a murmuring at the Lord for keeping me so long in this affliction." Shortly afterwards he fell asleep for a few minutes, and when he awoke he told his daughter-in-law that he felt more comfortable in his mind from that portion in Job: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job ii. 10.)

During his illness the Lord seemed to keep the enemy at a great distance. He was not permitted often to trouble him. At one time he requested me to find that portion: "Get thee behind me, Satan." I asked him if Satan was tempting him. He replied, "Yes, to pride; because so many of the great people call to inquire after me." At another time he said, "I have had such a conflict with the enemy; but I am more than ever convinced of the reality of those truths I have so long been enabled to preach. They will do to live and die with."

Mr. J. Gadsby saw him on June 19th. His voice was gone, he could only speak in a whisper; but his face was literally radiant with glory. He desired his daughter-in-law to read hymns 518 and 667, both by the late Mr. Gadsby. When she read the last line of the first verse of 518:

"Glory to the Lord on high;"

again the last line of the last verse:

"Hallelujah to their King;"

and throughout the whole of 667:

"Immortal honours rest on Jesus' head,"

he waved his arm triumphantly, and it seemed as if his soul had hard work to keep in his body. He then motioned his daughter-in-law to him, and whispered in her ear, "Tell him I cannot forget the solemn manner in which his father used to exclaim, with all the powers of his body and soul, 'Honours crown his brow for ever.' O how it rejoiced my soul! I see him now in the pulpit with the eye of my mind." And again he waved his arm, as if longing to fly up to him. He also expressed a wish that Mr. Philpot would look over the account he had written of himself, and correct it where necessary. Little did he then think that Mr. P. would be taken first.

Many had been the earnest prayers put up to the Lord on his behalf for his restoration; and, contrary to all our expectations, he began to recover, and about July 20th was able to be got up, when I said to him, "Well, my dear, I do hope the Lord will spare you to us a little longer;" at which remark he seemed quite cast down. He did not like the idea of getting better, and did not want to hear of it; but as he gained a little strength the Lord brought his mind

to it, and he began to have an ardent desire to speak once more in the name of the Lord, and, as he sometimes said, to tell the dear people how the Lord could support and comfort the mind in the prospect of death and dissolution.

On the 25th, he was carried downstairs, and during the following week was taken out a little in an invalid chair. The following Sabbath, August 1st, was the day appointed for the annual sermons for the Sabbath school. He was very anxious to be present in the afternoon, and give out the first hymn, which desire the Lord granted. He was indeed enabled to give out all three hymns. It was a solemn and impressive scene to see our aged and beloved pastor once more within the walls of that chapel he so dearly loved. Many were the tears shed by his dear church and congregation—tears both of sorrow and joy; sorrow to see him so altered, yet joy to have him once more amongst us. It was like life from the dead.

Our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Knight invited us to their house at Brooklands, Waterloo, near Liverpool, and as soon as he was considered fit to travel, we availed ourselves of their kind invitation, fondly hoping it might tend to recruit his strength, which it appeared to do at first, but the extremely warm weather which set in at that time tended greatly to prostrate him. He had every attention, and everything that could be provided by our kind friends, but returned home not so much improved as was hoped from the change. He, however, gradually gained a little strength, and on December 12th went into the pulpit in the afternoon, and took these words for a text: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (He was in the pulpit the Sabbath morning previously, speaking on the death of a young woman who had been brought up in the Sunday school, but did not take a text, and spoke only for a short time.) He spoke from the first part: "For me to live is Christ." In his remarks he alluded to the death of dear Mr. Philpot; likewise to what he had experienced in his own sickness. The next Sabbath he preached from the latter part: "And to die is gain." The following Sabbath he had these words: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.) Mr.

Chandler, the minister who was supplying at Rochdale that day, sat in the pulpit with him, and when they returned into the house he told my dear husband what a blessing had dropped into his soul while he was exalting Christ "as the peaceable one," who has made peace, by the blood of his cross, for all the redeemed from the earth. Indeed, this was his darling theme, and in preaching this sermon he appeared more like he was in former days than either of the others.

The Friday following he was not so well, and we tried to dissuade him from going into the pulpit on Lord's day, Jan. 2nd; but being the first Sabbath in the new year, he was so very desirous that we could not restrain him. He went in for the last time, and spoke from these words: "By them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." He afterwards assisted in administering the ordinance of the Lord's supper, but, from weakness, was not able to do what he had hoped and intended to do.

It had been the practice of my esteemed husband for many years, on the first ordinance day of the new year, to refer to those who had been gathered home from the church militant during the year; also to recapitulate the goodness and mercy of the Lord to us, as a church and people during the year, and after singing the Doxology, or the banqueting song, he would stretch out his hands towards us, and say, "Now go home; and the Lord go with you, and bless you." Indeed, this was his practice every time he administered the supper to us; and how strikingly did it display his fatherly care over the flock committed to his charge. Baptizing days and the days for the administering of the supper of the Lord were great days with him, having a holy solemnity of soul, becoming the occasion, yet generally a joyousness of spirit. He would often refer to Isa. xxxiii. 20: "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities." He much admired dear Mr. Gadsby's sermon on this text, and would often pray that the solemnities of Zion and a sense of our allegiance to Christ our King might engross more of our minds. (See Mr. Gadsby's Works, page 237.)

He gradually sank after this; and on the following Thursday evening took to his bed again, that bed from which he never again rose. The great consolations he

enjoyed during the early part of his affliction gradually diminished as he gained strength; but a calm settled peace in the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," rested upon his spirit, which he often expressed to ministers and friends who called to see him.

On the Friday (Jan. 7th) before he died, he requested me to get the Bible, saying, "It is not my usual custom to tell my texts before I preach from them; but I will tell you what I hope to preach from if I ever enter the pulpit again. It is in Zechariah: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.'" And he then added, "You must read the next verse, for I cannot remember it all." The verse being read, he said, "Yes, that's it. That's what I shall tell the people." (Zech. iv. 6, 7.)

Through extreme weakness, a kind of stupor seemed to come over him, with intervals of consciousness. Hearing him breathe with some difficulty, I said to him, "You seem to breathe hard." He replied, "Yes; a few more struggles and all will be over." Soon after, I said, "Are you happy in your mind, trusting in the Lord?" when he replied in the affirmative.

On Sunday evening, as I was standing watching him in silence, afraid of disturbing him, he began:

"'Yes, I shall soon be landed
On yonder shores of bliss;
With all my powers expanded,
Shall dwell where Jesus is;'"

joyfully repeating the last line several times; and then adding:

"'Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.'"

And in a minute or two afterwards:

"'Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in;'"

adding, "God is faithful! God is faithful!" which were the last words he distinctly spoke.

He took little notice after that, but lived until 20 minutes to 9 on Tuesday morning, when he expired in the most calm and peaceful manner, in the 78th year of his age, and the 53rd year of his pastorate over the church.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." (Ps. xxxvii. 37.) Whilst I was watching the last moments of my beloved husband, the first two verses of the following hymn of dear John Newton's incessantly dwelt on my mind; and as the whole of it is so appropriate to the dear departed, and many of my readers may not have a copy of the "Olney Hymns," I feel a great desire to insert it in these memoirs:

"In vain my fancy strives to paint
The moment after death;
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.

"One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;
We scarce can say, 'They're gone,'
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.

"Faith strives, but all its effort fail
To trace her in her flight;
No eye can pierce within the vail
Which hides that world of light.

"Thus much (and this is all) we know,
They are completely blest;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest.

"On harps of gold they praise his name;
His face they always view.
Then let us followers be of them,
That we may praise him too.

"Their faith and patience, love and zeal
Should make their memory dear;
And, Lord, do thou the prayers fulfil
They offer'd for us here.

"While they have gain'd, we losers are;
We miss them day by day,
But thou canst every breach repair,
And wipe our tears away.

"We pray, as in Elisha's case,
When great Elijah went,
May double portions of thy grace
To us who stay be sent."

THE FUNERAL.

(Copied from the "Gospel Standard.")

As it was morally certain that a large number of people would be present at the funeral, a programme, to prevent

confusion, was printed and circulated, stating the order to be observed, and containing also the hymns which were to be sung. This is a universal rule in the North on anniversary occasions for Sunday schools, &c.

The coffin was not closed until nearly ten o'clock, so that all who wished could take a last view of the one they so greatly loved for the truth's sake. The inscription on the lid was simply: "John Kershaw, died Jan. 11th, 1870, in his 78th year."

It was arranged, in accordance with Mr. Kershaw's wish, that the body should be taken into the chapel (the house adjoining the chapel) before taken to the cemetery. This was done exactly at 10.20, the mourners, including the widow, following. Admission into the chapel was by ticket —a judicious thought, to prevent the chapel being filled with townspeople to the exclusion of friends from a distance. In a few minutes every seat was occupied, and large numbers had to remain outside. Everyone present was not only in mourning, but in *deep* mourning, corresponding with the grief unmistakably experienced.

At 10.30, one of the ministers gave out the first hymn on the paper (112, Gadsby's):

"No more, my God, I boast no more," &c.

(This hymn, as expressed in the preceding report, was a favourite one of Mr. K.'s.) Mr. Vaughan, of Bradford, then read 2 Tim. iv. 1-7, commenting upon it as he proceeded, and making some excellent remarks with regard to the apostle; but only half an hour being allowed for the whole service in the chapel, his time was too limited to allow him to extend his remarks any way lengthily as to the deceased; otherwise, what an opening there was in verse 7. The second hymn on the paper (466, Gadsby's) was then sung: *

"Why do we mourn departed friends," &c.

Mr. Vaughan then pronounced the Benediction, and all prepared for departure to the cemetery.

* No one who has never heard a northern congregation unite in singing a well-known hymn to a well-known tune can form the slightest idea of the sublimity with which this hymn was sung. (Tune, *French*.) Every heart, every voice, seemed to join in one harmonious chord, and every syllable, sweet and melodious, was as distinct, as true to time, as if *spoken* by one individual only, and that individual an orator of note.

Preceding the hearse were four carriages, containing ministers; then the bearers; then immediately following the hearse were five mourning coaches; then carriages containing deacons and the committee, into one of which the writer of this account (Mr. J. Gadsby) was courteously pressed, along with Mr. Tatham, Mr. Knight of Liverpool, and Mr. Lake of Zoar, London; then other carriages; then friends on foot; then Sunday school scholars and teachers. It was impossible to see from one end of the procession to the other. There were altogether, a friend who counted them informed us, forty-nine carriages, including that of the present mayor and some other leading inhabitants of the town; for Mr. Kershaw was not only a true minister of the gospel, but also a good and useful citizen, the poor's man's friend and advocate in public as well as in private, and no man's enemy; consequently, universally respected. Thousands of people lined the streets and occupied the windows along the way of the *cortége*.

In two or three minutes after the mourners were seated in the cemetery chapel, a rolling stream of people filled the place. There was no rude pushing, though a tithe of the people could not get in. We should have been amongst the outsiders, had it not been for a little friendly giving way for us at the doors. We sat next to a Mr. Jackson, eighty years of age, one of the deacons, who is the only person now living who was connected with Hope Chapel in 1820. Mr. Kershaw settled there in 1817. The dear man had a coloured handkerchief over his head, the first sight of which drew a tear from our eyes, it so reminded us of our departed friend, who often covered his head in a similar way.

When the doors were closed, Mr. Hand quoted Dan. xii. 2, and made a few appropriate remarks thereon, adding: "On the third Sabbath in June last, when, to all appearance, our friend lay at the gate of death, I was at Rochdale supplying his pulpit. He expressed a desire to have the hymns which were sung that morning put upon paper. These hymns I cannot now call to mind, but they were read to him at the time. Before I entered the chapel, he communicated his desire to see me, and said, 'I wish you, in approaching the throne of grace in prayer, to ask the dear

Lord (if it be his will) to grant me a speedy dismissal from the body, that I may be present with him in everlasting rest.' Those who were with him informed me that, at the conclusion of the second hymn, when he thought I was about to read my text, he offered up a most solemn prayer: 'Now, O Lord, be with and help thy servant to declare thy solemn truth.' After this time, as is known to many, he gradually recovered a little strength, and was able to enter his chapel. Upon the last Sabbath, I believe, in October, I was again supplying for him. In the afternoon he entered the chapel, and was enabled to continue there to listen to the sermon. When over, he retired to his parlour, and when I entered the house he sent for me; and, as he lay upon the sofa, he put out his hand, and grasped mine with all the warmth of sincere and brotherly affection, and addressed me thus: 'The Lord bless you, and always enable you to preach his solemn truth as I have heard you this afternoon.' Upon another occasion, after he had heard me, he gave me this counsel: 'Friend Hand, in dealing out the truths of God, always endeavour to leave the historical part of it as soon as you can, and seek to get into the vein of experimental truth, whereby you may feed the living family of God.' On the Sabbath prior to his departure I was again supplying for him. He was then confined to his bed, suffering acute pain; but his mind was most blessedly ruminating upon eternal things. On the following day, at noon, I, with Mrs. Kershaw, his son John, and a friend, stood around his bed, momentarily expecting his redeemed soul to quit its clay tenement. Mrs. K. said, 'Mr. Hand, come close to him, and gently ask him if he knows you.' I did as she requested me. My last words to the departed saint were, 'My dear Mr. Kershaw, do you know my voice?' He answered, 'Yes; it is Mr. Hand.' I then left him."

Mr. Hand then offered up a few words in prayer, and was evidently deeply affected.

The body was then taken to its last earthly abode—a capacious brick grave—and placed between two infant grandchildren.

Mr. Taylor addressed the assembled multitude, as follows: "Beloved Brethren and Friends in the Lord Jesus Christ,—We have now laid in the cold grave, but hopeful resting-

place, the mortal remains of our beloved brother; and say, 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes! Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' But, though sorrow and sadness press upon our spirits, we know that our brother shall rise again; for the earth shall cast out the dead. Yes, 'Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead.'

"It is twenty-six years, within a few days, since I held our departed brother's hat, while he addressed many hundreds who stood around the open grave and dead body of dear William Gadsby. I have not stood by the grave of any mortal, more sweetly satisfied of the safety of the soul than I do now. This body is the mortal remains, not only of a saint, but of an honoured servant of the Lord Jesus, who has carried the good news and glad things of salvation to many souls in trouble; and he had many seals to his ministry and souls for his hire.

"About the end of the year 1827, if I mistake not, I first heard our departed brother preach; and though I was but young, I had heard many glowing sermons by highly educated and, I must say, some of them excellent men; but friend Kershaw was the first man I observed seeking to apply the truth of God to the heart, and showing how the believer's soul, echoing back the truth of revelation, seeks communion with God. He seemed to me to have a higher aim than simply to move the senses. He sought to affect the heart; reaching past common things, sought to move the soul. I then thought him a man verily in earnest, though a very plain man indeed. And, brethren, since then our brother John Kershaw has preached the gospel of the Son of God in almost every city, town, village, and hamlet in England—and in Scotland, too, he has declared the mysteries of the Cross; and now, like a shock of corn fully ripe, the soul is gathered with the redeemed above, while the mortal remains shall rest in hope, till the morning of that auspicious day when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. The town of Rochdale has known our brother all his life, and for more than fifty years he has been pastor over a flock of saints there, many of whom are gone before him, over the flood. That our brother's

good character is beyond dispute, as a neighbour, a friend, a citizen, a Christian, and a gospel minister, all who knew him fully admit. In many respects our brother was an amiable man. He was kind, affectionate, and tender, even to a fault. He well knew how to seek for the life of God in a longing sinner's soul, and, if there, seldom failed to find it; and would seek to comfort the spirit, by bringing on to the foreground the invitations and promises of the gospel:

> "If John found roots, the case was his;
> He knew that sighs would turn to praise.

"I now stand surrounded by many hundreds of his townsmen and friends, who are paying this last tribute of respect to his mortal remains; and not only so, but I feel confident that the very flower and bloom of Rochdale, in divine things, stand before me around this grave; men taught by the Spirit of God, many aged and infirm among you, waiting out your short life's span, when you also must be laid in the house appointed for all living. The Lord raise your hearts above the fear of death. Death is a conquered foe, and the last enemy to be destroyed. Our most glorious Redeemer has spoiled death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. Fear not, brethren, to look the enemy in the face; look beyond him over the flood. 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is the way to God, to heaven, and to glory. A word or two about the way to God, brethren. You heard in the adjoining chapel that portion of truth: 'Ye must be born again;' a truth indeed, but a truth ignored; yet a truth that will outlive all time, and a truth without the power and experience of which no man can see the kingdom of God. Our Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. 'No man,' said he, 'cometh unto the Father but by me.' God has said, 'There is a path that no fowl knoweth, that the vulture's eye hath not seen;' and that 'the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' This is the path of the just; that shining path. The redeemed walk there. Upon it they return to Zion; and though there is much sighing, there is also singing; and because the Lord leads them, therefore 'the righteous shall hold on his way;' and though the way seem very narrow at

times, again it is indeed a place of broad rivers and streams to the poor saints who flow together to the goodness of the Lord, to the place where the hand of the Lord rests, where he himself feeds the flock of slaughter, and carries the lambs in his bosom, and leads gently the heavy-laden souls.

"And now, brethren, a few thoughts on the resurrection of the dead. Paul says to the Romans, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' This doctrine is a doctrine purely of faith. I mean we have no experience of it, in the same way we experience a sense of pardon, mercy, and adoption; or when we have an answer to prayer, we know that God hears us, and that he is a prayer-hearing God. It is not time yet to experience the doctrine in question; but faith, the faith of the operation of God, holds it fast, and says with Paul, 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruit.' And the church must follow: 'If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him,' both by faith here and in eternal glory above. As of old, so now, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then the Christian life is but a name. When Paul preached the resurrection of the body, 'some mocked;' and it grieved the Sadducees of old that through Jesus this doctrine was made known. And now the departed, as well as the living, are looking forward to that glorious time, the one saying, 'How long, O Lord, how long shall it be?' while we also look for the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory; thus we wait for 'the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' This doctrine, my brethren, is the grand key-stone in the economy of salvation: 'If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins, and we are false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not, and they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.'

"The justice of God demands the resurrection of the wicked dead. As the death of the body cannot atone for sin, there must be a re-union, that the soul and body which sinned together may be judged, one complete, entire person.

Hence Daniel says, 'Some to shame and everlasting contempt.' Then it will be known most fully that God will by no means clear the guilty. (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Num. xiv. 18.)

"But you, ye saints of the most high God, who have fled for refuge, and have laid hold on the hope set before you, your faith beholds the empty grave of Christ, your death-conquering Jesus, for it was not possible that he could be holden of death. And here, child of sorrow, child of hope, you shelter under cover of him who lives and was dead, who also rose and revived, and says, 'Because I live, ye shall live also;' and your very heart says, 'O to know more of the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and to be made conformable to his death.'

"And now, brethren, a word to you who have lost a pastor deservedly beloved. This is the time when the enemy, the accuser of the brethren, may, and will, seek to sow discord among you, and seek to separate chief friends. Brethren, stand fast; I beg of you, stand fast in the gospel of God,—Father, Son, and Spirit. Stand close together; stand true to gospel rule. Let no detached power guide your action. No authority outside the church should move you. Accept with gratitude all kindness from such who wish you well, but maintain *church government*, not party or personal rule. Christ's church is well directed in God's word; the Lord himself is her Lawgiver and Saviour; and should you, through weakness or error, mistake a point, as most do, retract at once, and the act being one by the church assembled, the whole body bears the burden, and may find you an errand to God for wisdom, who gives liberally and upbraideth not. And, brethren, above all, keep your pulpit clean; and the Lord give you understanding in all things to do his will.

"And again I say, we leave in this last resting-place the mortal remains of our beloved brother; and as one star differeth from another star in glory, so, exactly so, shall the resurrection body differ from this which we have sown in corruption, to be raised in incorruption, sown in weakness to be raised in power, sown a natural body to be raised a spiritual body. And thus we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the

working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Mr. Leach, of Hollinwood, then gave out the third hymn on the paper (439, Gadsby's, with two additional verses):

"When I survey the wondrous cross," &c.,

and closed the mournful whole with prayer.

It was estimated that there were about 1,800 or 2,000 persons present. There would have been hundreds more, had circumstances been more favourable. But the cemetery is nearly two miles from the chapel, the roads were dreadfully muddy, and the air damp and exceedingly foggy; besides which, the early hour fixed for the service must have kept many at home, as even from Manchester there was no train which would be in time after the one at 8.40, and that was due at Rochdale at 9.5, above an hour too soon.

The funeral took place on Monday, Jan. 17th.

A friend (son of the late Mr. Horbury, minister, of Blackburn) has kindly sent us a list of persons present, so far as he could ascertain their names; but it is so numerous, we cannot possibly spare the space for them, though we hoped to have been able to do so. We must content ourselves by saying there were friends from Manchester, Charlesworth, Hollinwood, Bury, Preston, Stockport, Eccles, Holywell Green, Slaithwaite, Bradford, Warrington, Ogden, Blackburn, Thurlston, Church, Wigan, Halifax, Bacup, Chatterton, Haslingden, Lansfield, Hyde, Stacksteads, Hebden Bridge, Blackpool, Saddleworth, Denholme, Hindley, Liverpool, London, Oldham, Chester, Clayton, &c., &c.

Notwithstanding that it was Monday, and so early, the following ministers were present: Messrs. Ramsbottom, Accrington; Archer, Blackburn; Vaughan, Bradford; Hand, Charlesworth (Derbyshire); Standeven, Eccles; Rastern and David Smith, Halifax; Kent and Powell, Heywood; Leach, Hollinwood; Davidson, Holywell Green; Taylor, Manchester; Nuttal, Ogden; Neal, Oldham; Howarth, Preston; M'Cappin, Chapman, Lewis, Masterman, Parkinson, Pickles, and Pitt, Rochdale; Bamford, Slaithwaite; Chandler, Stockport; Ritson, Warrington; Derbyshire, Wigan.

There was a deputation from the church at Manchester, to express their sympathy with the widow and the brethren at Rochdale.

Many of the friends from the country returned to the chapel, or rather to the noble school-room close by, where refreshments were provided. Nearly 200 sat down at one time. They were waited upon by the Sunday-school teachers and others.

We feel that we cannot acquit our conscience without bearing our testimony to the admirable way in which everything was carried out, the only drawback being the early hour fixed for the service. But the time was fixed by the deceased, it being the time he for so many years went into the chapel on a Lord's day morning.

Mr. K. has left only one child,—a son; and he is the father of six children, the eldest being 25. He is Registrar of the district in which he resides, and stands well with his fellow-townsmen. There is also a grand-daughter, her mother, Mr. K.'s daughter, having been deceased some years.

The preceding account was taken almost *verbatim* from the "Gospel Standard" for February, 1870.

CONCLUSION.

As everything relating to the ministers of Christ whose labours have been owned and blessed of the Lord to the edification of the churches is acceptable, I would just add that my dear husband's grave-stone is of polished Aberdeen granite, with the following inscription:

"Here resteth, in sure and certain hope of a resurrection unto eternal life, all that is mortal of John Kershaw, nearly 53 years Pastor of the church at Hope Chapel, Rochdale. He died Jan. 11th, 1870, in the 78th year of his age.

"And while he '*press'd*' to seats of bliss,
He sang no other song but this:
'A sinner saved by grace.'"

"'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.'—EPH. ii. 8."

The church and congregation have erected a Tablet in the chapel, with the following inscription:

ERECTED
BY THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
WORSHIPPING AT HOPE CHAPEL,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THEIR BELOVED PASTOR,

JOHN KERSHAW,

WHO ENTERED HIS ETERNAL REST JAN. 11TH, 1870,
IN THE 78TH YEAR OF HIS AGE, AND THE 53RD
OF HIS PASTORATE HERE;
AND WAS INTERRED IN THE ROCHDALE CEMETERY, JAN. 17TH.
"A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE."
"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD."
—REV. xiv. 13.

The committee, teachers, and scholars of the Sabbath school have also put up a Tablet:

THIS TABLET
WAS ERECTED BY THE COMMITTEE,
TEACHERS, AND SCHOLARS OF
THIS SABBATH SCHOOL,
IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF

JOHN KERSHAW,

52 YEARS PASTOR OF THE CHURCH AT HOPE
CHAPEL. HE WAS ONE THE FOUNDERS OF
THIS SCHOOL, OFFERING UP MANY
PRAYERS FOR ITS PROSPERITY.
HE DIED JAN 11TH, 1870,
IN THE 78TH YEAR OF HIS AGE,
AND WAS INTERRED
IN THE ROCHDALE CEMETERY.
"THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE."
PSA. CXII. 6.

The Memorials are now completed. They were begun by my dear husband, in the firm belief that the Lord would make them a blessing to his dear family. The Lord grant that such may be the happy issue. With the hope that such may be the case, I send them forth to the churches.

LYDIA KERSHAW.

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